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THE ghost of the League Assembly opened its proceedings by listening to an indictment of Russia's attack on Finland by her delegate. On the proposition of Sweden, a committee of fourteen States was named to deliberate on Finland's appeal for help. It then instructed M. Avenol to despatch a telegram to Moscow, proposing the immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of negotiations under the League's auspices. On British initiative an answer was requested within twenty-four hours. M. Molotov's reply was curt and negative. He was content to refer to his previous despatch which recognised the puppet junta of M. Kuusinen as the lawful government of Finland, and told the League to mind its own business. On Wednesday, the Assembly heard the proposal of Argentina to expel Russia from the League. She is, as all the world will note, the first offender to be singled out for the extreme penalty. Abstentions in the voting do not infringe the rule of unanimity, and the Council will doubtless act on this motion. The League in Europe is now shrunk to two preoccupied Great Powers with a flock of neutrals who dare neither act nor vote. Any help that can be given to Finland will now follow the precedents of non-intervention in Spain. America is granting credits for food and other supplies up to the value of Finland's debt payments cancelled by Congress. By what route can these arrive? In Sweden the struggle between the neutral majority and the minority that would have gone to war for Finland has ended in the victory of the neutrals and the entry into the reconstituted Ministry of Conservatives and Liberals. The Socialist M. Hansson is still Premier, but M. Sandler, who was for fighting, has been dropped.

The Finnish Campaign

The military operations in the Finnish War are not easy to follow, but the current comments of the daily press make too little allowance for the distances that have to be covered. Everywhere it is clear that the Finns are defending themselves with courage and resource. The deadliest of the three Russian lines of attack, across the "waist" of Finland, seems to encounter little resistance. The invading forces in three armies are rolling forward, and may soon be able to cut the coast railway between Tornio and Oulu at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia. This would sever the land connection with Sweden, and isolate the defenders of distant Petsamo. In the twilight of that Arctic battlefield the news suggests little more than confused guerilla operations, in which the Finns have an advantage from their intimate knowledge of the country. Even so it is not easy to account for the slowness of Russian operations in the Karelian Isthmus against the Mannerheim Line, for here they have at their base immediately behind them all the resources of Leningrad. It is probable that the Russians miscalculated by under-

estimating their enemy, but whether their General Staff or their political leadership was to blame for this, we do not profess to know. It should be remembered that the tactics and equipment of the Red Army are designed primarily for a swift war of movement over the featureless plains of Eastern Europe. It has not shone in the wholly different conditions of this Finnish campaign. After initial checks the U.S.S.R. appears now to be preparing a larger offensive.

Anglo-French Relations

We commented, when the plans for Anglo-French economic co-operation were announced a few weeks ago, on the curious absence of any mention of finance. This gap has now been filled by a financial agreement which seems to be comprehensive enough to meet the need. For the war and the immediate post-war period, the pound and the franc are to be exchangeable at an unaltered rate; each country is to spend its available supplies of the other's currency on the other's goods—including empire goods in both cases; there are to be no fresh tariffs, quotas or other obstacles to mutual trade, which is to be developed as far as possible; any foreign borrowing is to be arranged for jointly; and any subsidies, e.g. to the Poles, are to be met by the British paying 60 and the French 40 per cent. These measures, it is important to realise, involve a common price policy for the two countries; for how else are the exchanges to be kept stable? They involve also a very comprehensive actual use of the plans for economic co-operation already announced. Indeed, the centre of control in economic policy is bound to be largely with the Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee now at work under the very distinguished chairmanship of M. Jean Monnet, who played an important part in the work of inter-Allied co-operation during the later stages of the last war. It is now of vital importance to re-establish contact between the public opinions of France and Britain, upon which an unprecedented black-out has descended.

Anglo-French War-aims

The public discussion of war aims in this country has produced a largely negative response in France. Win the war, say the French, before talking about building the peace. But an article in *Figaro* last week, by Vladimir D'Ormesson, marks a notable advance. The fundamental problem, he argues, is how we can build a European order in which the millions spent on armaments can be turned to the improvement of social conditions. This problem should be tackled by a commission of experts. We would heartily support the proposal for a commission, adding however that it should be composed of Frenchmen and Englishmen, and that its work should be regarded as complementary to and of equal importance with the Anglo-French committees on economic and financial co-operation. But to talk of such a commission without at the same time encouraging free public discussion of the subject is to misunderstand the situation. The meaning and purpose of this war are to-day being universally discussed everywhere, on the Maginot Line no less than in the streets of London and Wigan. We note, for instance, the swift demand for such pamphlets as that of Mr. G. D. H. Cole on *War Aims*. It is no good for the authorities to talk of "winning the war first."

The Unrecorded Unemployed

The Ministry of Labour has opened this week a new register for the middle-class unemployed. The professional classes have been provided for already through the special register drawn up with the aid of the various professional associations and institutes; and the manual workers, as well as some classes of blackcoats, such as clerks and shop assistants, are covered by the Employment Exchanges. But there is a large intermediate group, neither insured against unemployment nor included in the professional register; and this group is suffering severely from the shutting down of many small businesses and the dislocation of ordinary peacetime services. It is, for example, an ironical fact that there is heavy unemployment among trained nurses. In effect, so far is this country from even approaching a state of full employment that people are still being thrown out of ordinary jobs very nearly as fast as they are being taken on for war work. This, of course, is only one aspect of the general confusion of economic planning.

The Prime Minister Refuses to Budge

Mr. Chamberlain, however, apparently remains unimpressed by this demand for greater efficiency on the home front—or at any rate did remain unimpressed up to the date of the secret session of Parliament, at which he no doubt heard a great deal about the state of feeling on the matter in all parties. On Monday of this week he and the Chancellor of the Exchequer met a deputation from the Federation of British Industries, which wished to urge upon the Government a unified economic policy designed to give a proper place to the demands of the export trades. What the F.B.I. asked for was a single authority charged with the oversight of exports and under the control of a member of the War Cabinet. Mr. Chamberlain, in reply, said that he appreciated the importance of exports, but saw no advantage in appointing a separate minister for economic questions. He merely suggested that the F.B.I. should have another cosy little chat with the President of the Board of Trade.

Sea and Air

The Air Ministry announcement about the "security patrols" continuously maintained on Tuesday night over the German mine-laying bases was conspicuous chiefly for its succinctness. But it does not require much imagination to perceive that this must have been a feat of extraordinary boldness and brilliance. These seaplane bases are some 300 miles from this country by the long islands that lie like part of a reef parallel with the South coast of the Bight of Heligoland. That our bombers could maintain "continuously" a patrol over so distant an objective shows the quality of the crews and their machines. The announcement concludes that the operations were successfully performed "despite considerable anti-aircraft opposition." Nothing is said of opposition from German fighters, and we presume, therefore, that none of these made an appearance, though there was time and more than time for help to be sent from a number of German aerodromes. This significant achievement more than compensates for the safe return to harbour of the *Bremen*. Many critics, some of them American, have made this a reason for attacking the British Admiralty.

But a submarine cannot capture a liner of this size and speed, and to sink a passenger ship without warning would be a breach of those international laws which we can with justice boast of defending. Some American journalists may crack an easy joke on the subject, but we believe that in the long run this policy will command the sympathy of the United States.

The Livestock Price-Ramp

An agricultural correspondent writes: On November 30th farmers suddenly heard on the six o'clock news that the Livestock Price-Control would be suspended "to ease the trade." The announcement suggested that, since stocks were large, there was no danger of a rise in prices. On the next morning, many of us received a circular from a large bacon manufacturer offering a price-increase of 2*s.* per score. This circular, which was dated December 1st, though it was posted on the 30th, had been prepared with complete fore-knowledge of the decontrol which surprised us, and disposed of the assertion that it would result in no price-increase. The reason for the Government's decision can only be guessed at. It was not pressure from the Farmers' Union, which was surprised by the announcement, though not dismayed by the prospect of profit-taking. Nor can it be excused by the argument that the control, though a good idea, was badly worked: since the inefficient working was the result of the Government's own half-heartedness. Maximum prices and grades, for instance, were instituted for fat-stock, but cattle, sheep, and pigs, if marketed as store animals, were not graded; nor was a maximum price fixed. So fat pigs could be sold as store animals at prices above the maximum. It is the same with foodstuffs. The price of oats was fixed, but "samples for seed purposes" changed hands at prices well above the maximum and vanished long before they could be sown. These examples of the inefficiency of the control could be multiplied; but they offer no excuse for suddenly abandoning it. Having abolished partial control, however, the Government now states that a new and more stringent fat-stock control through the slaughter-houses will shortly be instituted. But this announcement merely makes matters worse, since the period between the two controls will be used to force prices up. As usual it is the consumer who will bear the brunt of soaring prices and the children who, when milk prices are increased, will suffer most.

The Stretford By-election

The Stretford by-election result received very little publicity in the press, beyond the obvious comment that the Communist forfeited his deposit. The figures, however, merit careful attention. In a constituency whose population has increased from 58,000 in 1929 to 75,000 in 1935, the Labour poll remained fairly stationary, increasing only from 18,000 to 19,000, while in 1935 the Conservative received 34,800 votes. Last week on a low poll the Conservative got 23,408, while the combined vote of the anti-war candidates was just under 6,000. This means that one in six of those who troubled to vote were, for a variety of reasons, in favour of immediate peace, a remarkable difference from Clackmannan where a few weeks ago the Pacifist, standing against Labour, only got one in fifteen, in spite of a strong I.L.P. tradition. There are two conclusions to be drawn from this result. The first is the folly of those who repeat that the home front is sound as a bell and needs no attention; the second that the party-truce is an unsatisfactory device in such a war as this. The Labour and Liberal Parties should be in a position to make their own case. In Stretford, while Labour was muzzled the Government was strongly attacked by the Communist and I.L.P. speakers, the latter being (involuntarily) assisted by Fascist canvassers at meetings. The electoral truce should be ended.

The Legacy of Versailles

The Archbishop of York has called attention in his letters to the *Daily Telegraph* to one of the gravest political difficulties that confront the Allies in their dealings with the German people. However sincerely we may assert that we desire a reasonable settlement, on which a free Europe might build a system of pacific co-operation, the memory of Germany goes back to its bitter experience in 1918. It surrendered, so runs its argument, on the basis of Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points, which the Treaty of Versailles contradicted both in spirit and letter. The answer of the *Daily Telegraph* seems to us wholly inadequate. It is true that the German Army was nearing collapse and that it surrendered unconditionally. That does not dispose of the fact that in speeches, manifestos and letters addressed to the German Government, Mr. Wilson had defined the political conditions of the peace. In so doing he spoke admittedly for all the Allied and Associated Powers. This was expressly recognised by M. Clemenceau, as Dr. Temple points out. His official letter to the Germans of June 16th, 1919, in defence of the Versailles Treaty agrees that the correspondence which preceded the Armistice was the basis recognised for the definitive Treaty of Peace. "It was then agreed that the Treaty of Peace should be based upon the Fourteen Points . . . as modified by the Allies' memorandum . . . and upon the principles of settlement enunciated by President Wilson in his later addresses." This is both explicit and authoritative. The only question that remains is, therefore, whether in fact the Versailles Treaty was at variance with the Wilsonian sketch. Few of us would dare to-day to argue, as M. Clemenceau did, that they were in agreement. The real vice of Versailles was not that it was too harsh or too mild to Germany, but that it tried to reconcile a number of irreconcilable objectives. Probably the worst German grievance was the lawyers' trick by which the agreed responsibility to make good the damage wrought by invasion was stretched to include our expenditure on the maintenance of our soldiers' dependents. Much of the case against the Treaty is propaganda; it conferred more freedom than it took away. But it remains an obstacle since every German remembers that Versailles was a *Dictat*.

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PROGRESS AND ANARCHY

THE Soviet invasion of Finland clarifies rather than complicates the world kaleidoscope. The flagrant contradiction between Stalin's present aggression and his former pretensions clears away the incubus of wishful thoughts. No Power has so consistently demanded resistance to aggression; no Power has so much insisted on a precise definition of aggression. In 1933, for instance, M. Litvinov proposed on behalf of the U.S.S.R. a definition which included among other "proofs" of aggression, "the invasion by its armed forces of the territory of another State without declaration of war." The definition then ruled out as a justification for an aggressive action any plea "of a political, strategical or economic nature, such as" that the victim had been responsible for frontier incidents or set up any particular economic or social system. All this play with law and morality Stalin has abandoned. He would say, if indeed he ever took the League seriously, that since the Capitalist States had refused his definitions, and abandoned any attempt to create a world order, it was ludicrous, with the skeletons of Abyssinia, Czecho-Slovakia, Spain and Manchuria rattling in their cupboards, for them now to go through the gesture of pronouncing on him their futile excommunications. In the jungle he prefers to be a hunter rather than a victim.

The U.S.S.R., in a word, has joined the group of Powers looking round for possible prey, and sees as victims countries that are small or easy to conquer and Empires that are fat and vulnerable. Russian armies carry with them, in some form, a revolutionary idea. Hitler's armies —the contrast, as the *Times* admits, is striking enough in Poland—bring with them nothing but fire and slavery. On one point, however, Germany, the U.S.S.R. and Japan are in agreement. They stand for a new Totalitarian idea which is to be fulfilled at the expense of the Western Empires and of countries whose security has depended on these Empires. There is, it seems, no neutrality in this modern war.

The expansionist States may not be friends, but they have more to gain at the present stage of history by joint spoliation than by quarrelling amongst themselves. Of course they may quarrel; but the present signs point rather to collaboration. If Stalin and Hitler both turn their eyes on Sweden, which with the other Scandinavian Powers may be considered the highest product which civilisation has ever achieved, they are likely jointly to attempt its spoliation rather than to fight over their prey. The same argument may apply to rich areas of the Balkans and the Middle East, where Stalin's advance would gravely embarrass the Western Powers. In the Far East the U.S.S.R. is continuing to help China in very material ways, while Japan has been seeking to set up a puppet Government at Nanking which would be hostile to the U.S.S.R. Yet discussions are now proceeding which may lead to a Japanese-Soviet agreement. To-day "ideologies" are at a discount just as they were in the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; in both cases the original issues were clearly enough defined, but in the struggle for power the ideological differences became confused. Fascist may be the ally of Communist in the twentieth century just as Catholic became the ally of Protestant and Turk in the seventeenth century. The struggle at the moment is most accurately seen as a joint challenge to the old civilised and conservative Empires by Totalitarian Powers which care nothing for the old order or the moral system which supported it; they may differ in the systems they wish to substitute, but agree in the joyous prospect of destroying established power with fire and bayonet and trampling into the dust the tradition of liberty, law and morality which has been handed down in the West from Greece, Rome and Judea.

Such is the result of destroying the embryonic World State which those who could see and understand tried to set up out of the anarchy of the last war. They failed because short-sighted governments, existing to maintain the Sovereignty of the States they represented and the vested interests of the financial and business groups that controlled these States, could not agree to act collectively or constructively for any world purpose. The result of their failure is what we see to-day—a world in which no moral relationship exists between State and State, in which those who have the power take what they can or hold on to what they possess. It is only too likely that in such a world, war should become endemic. It may go on indefinitely now in many parts of the world, now in one part, now in another. It may wipe out most of what science and civilisation has brought of social betterment and communal happiness. If that destruction is not to be world-wide, sane men must get together to consider what they can build, how they can hold on to what is valuable in the present while discarding what can no longer be defended either by argument or by military power.

Such a survey of the situation leads immediately to realisation that the totalitarian regimes have had so much success because they have been ruthless and dynamic, while the old regimes have been timid and conservative. The totalitarian Powers have understood that it is an age when economic organisation must be centrally planned and extended over a wide area; they calculated that the comparatively mild and unorganised control of Empires, based on international finance, would be easy to destroy. Here they underestimated the strength of the national forces against them. But their challenge to the civilisation of the West represents more than a military threat. It is a challenge to the soul of each person in the countries that claim to be democratic. It places those who watch and understand this historical process through which the world is passing in an almost intolerable dilemma. They have watched the truths of Socialism accepted and finally perverted in Russia and adapted to their own foul purposes by the Nazis; they watch their own governments for years refusing to take the steps necessary for the organisation of a modern State. They must be opponents of the totalitarian regimes because these regimes deny to the individual the most elementary rights, and repudiate those values which alone justify the State's coercive power. They find themselves ranged willy nilly behind imperialist governments, whose short-sighted selfishness and lack of imagination have brought them to this pass. They know that whatever happens in the war, the system of nineteenth century capitalism is doomed; they know, too, that if their governments could see it, there is a way of organising the world through the

instrument of Federation—an instrument successful in various ways in the United States, the U.S.S.R., and Switzerland. It is possible to combine the freedom of the cultural group, which is the heart of a nation with the advantages of large-scale economic organisation, which must be the basis of the modern Socialist State. Without a constructive peace aim, the war is a meaningless slaughter; by neglecting such an aim (hedged round with all the safeguards that honesty now makes necessary) we are neglecting one of the most potent weapons at our disposal. However it should be put, the Germans, and all the other peoples who hate the war and ask questions in the black-out or the trenches, will demand a world in which the national state does not periodically demand their death. Mr. Chamberlain spoke the other day of a better world to come. In this life or the next? Can we hope from Mr. Chamberlain a dynamic to counter the barbarism of the Nazis?

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

THE latest disclosures, in the House of Lords debate, are an indication that something is still amiss in the Bloomsbury skyscraper. In spite of the orgy of self-backslapping with which Lord Camrose celebrated his departure, his "reconstruction" had been little more than a massacre of the innocents. He had decimated the ranks of the experts but left safe in their posts most of the "high-ups," who planned the Ministry before the war and ran it into trouble in the first weeks after the war. To-day, although the Foreign and Empire Publicity are now running efficiently within the extremely narrow limits of Government policy, the basic defects of the Ministry are still untouched.

The most important of these defects is that the function of the Ministry has not yet been clearly defined. In September it looked for the moment as though the Ministry was intended to be a real centre of Government propaganda at home and abroad. In centralising the distribution and censorship of "hot news" and bringing the press relations officers of the several Government Departments to Bloomsbury, Sir Samuel Hoare seemed to have in mind the systematic planning of publicity in Britain and of propaganda abroad, though it should be noted that neither the B.B.C. nor the Film Industry were included within the scheme.

This first plan failed for many reasons. The most important was the inadequacy of the Ministry, as then constituted, for the task. Its chiefs were lamentably inefficient planners, and the revolt of the Service Departments and of the Newspaper Proprietors followed inevitably. The censorship was cut loose from the Ministry, and the Departments resumed direct contact with the press through their own press-officers, in spite of a protest from the journalists who preferred to walk from room to room inside one building in their search for news, instead of running up and down Whitehall.

Thus the result of an over-ambitious beginning was that the Departments, especially the Service Departments, became even more autocratic in their treatment of news than before. Moreover, the press, the B.B.C. and the Films Industry, which might, by more cautious methods, have been coaxed into voluntary submission to the Government's plans, were enraged by the fatuous behaviour of the Ministry and suspicious of its intentions; while the War Cabinet, composed of Service Chiefs, for whom the Home Front does not exist, and civilians contemptuous of all publicity-ideas, made no effort either to clear out those responsible for the mess or to decide what the Ministry was for.

It was in these conditions that, after the departure of Lord Camrose and Sir Findlater Stewart, Lord Macmillan and his new Director-General, Sir Kenneth Lee, set about reorganising the Ministry. Not unnaturally the best divisions are those for Foreign and Empire propaganda. For here the Foreign and Empire broadcasts of the B.B.C. have been brought under departmental supervision, while publicity abroad does not interfere with the freedom of the London press. Only on the Films side have they failed completely and this is not their fault but that of the Films division of the Ministry, and of the trade, which have with a surprising unanimity baulked all efforts to produce Government documentaries. Sir Joseph Ball, who is in charge of Films and was previously working for the Conservative Party, seems to feel that one Lion with Wings makes a film summer.

It is to be observed that the Foreign and Empire divisions, like the Enemy Propaganda division, are permitted very considerable freedom of action by the heads of the Ministry, and have worked all the more efficiently for this. When we turn to the Home Front, we find a very different picture. Apart from three or four posters, and a tiny weekly publication to secretaries of voluntary societies, we find that the Ministry of Information has little to its credit.

The first cause of this failure is plain funk. Whereas foreign propaganda can go out in considerable quantities without producing a flutter of parliamentary questions, a Ministry of Information pamphlet or poster or even leaflet may, and almost certainly will, arouse a storm of criticism. This timidity is exemplified by the extraordinary process of drafting and redrafting through which all manuscripts must pass, a process in which the journalists are supervised by a number of Civil Servants, each with his own ideas about style and context. A popular pamphlet is handled as though it were a "memo" of first importance, amended with a gay disregard both for time and for the nature of its intended reader—and finally issues from the machine, guaranteed harmless and stone-cold. The Ministry should start a museum of unpublished masterpieces, in all stages of development from the first draft to the lifeless officialese, approved by all but unfortunately condemned to oblivion, since by its completion the time for publication has long since gone.

The second reason for the collapse of Home Publicity has been already indicated. It is the failure to define the relations of the Ministry with other Government departments, the press or the B.B.C. Since the B.B.C. lost autonomy in its Foreign and Empire programmes, it has been even more jealous in guarding its complete control of home news and programmes, and its policy in these matters has remained largely unaffected by the war. There is at present no possibility of a systematic effort to counteract the influence which Nazi broadcasting exerts on British listeners. The Government departments, having defeated the Ministry in the first round, regard it now with an amused superiority. Each does its own publicity, usually without consulting the others, and the Ministry is only called in for unpleasant jobs which a department does not wish to tackle. The Film Industry, having got Sir Joseph Ball where they want him, snap their fingers at anyone who tries to poach on their profitable preserves, while the press, rightly jealous of its freedom and impatient of a Ministry which provides it with no information, is unwilling to accept from Bloomsbury articles which it can do better in Fleet Street.

The final reason for this failure is fundamental and raises again the question alluded to at the beginning of this article: what is the function of the Ministry? The Ministry of Information could be an efficient department, if it had at the head of it a group of men who had a policy and wished to put it across. But Lord Macmillan and his permanent advisers have no clear policy and an extreme distaste for publicity. The few men in the Ministry who know anything of publishing or publicity occupy humble posts and are regarded as vulgar by those in command. Even the suggestion that experts on public opinion and market research should work out for the guidance of the Minister a scientific barometer of war-morale was turned down for months as unbecoming by Lord Macmillan, and has still not been carried into effect. The crying need to-day is not for more journalists to submit

manuscripts to their superiors but for a few men at the top of the Ministry who will decide what they want to do and do it with a will. Given such leadership, the work of the Foreign and Empire divisions could be vastly enlarged, and a start could be made on countering the effects of enemy propaganda in this country.

There is only one policy which will have any chance of success in a democratic country. The Ministry should seek to be not the producer of publicity on the home front but the friendly co-ordinator, and should rely, less on an inside staff of journalists, publicity experts, etc., and more on the advice of outside experts, who are always willing to co-operate at no cost to the taxpayer. If the Government wishes to launch a campaign, it would be well advised to take the advice of the heads of the advertising profession and to give the work of the campaign to an outside firm. In the same way an informal liaison with London and provincial newspapers and a service of useful background material, will produce better, if less spectacular, results than any attempt by the Ministry to do the work of the press. What is needed here is not an elaborate production unit, but a small staff of men trained in the work of "Public Relations," and conversant with the methods of journalism and publicity.

Only in one field should the Ministry itself be a producer, and that field is pamphleteering. But though there must be a small unit inside the Ministry to collect and sift the material, the actual composition would best be left to outside writers, with reputations big enough to daunt even the Civil Servant's zeal for sub-editing. For this purpose the rule should be abolished which forbids persons working for the Government to write under their own names. It is ridiculous that men like Professors Seton-Watson and Toynbee, Charles Morgan and "Bartimæus" (to name only a few) should be unable to sign articles and pamphlets. There is an immense demand for pamphlets of all kinds, and the Ministry could satisfy it, if it was run by men with a policy.

In the last place, the attempt to run public meetings and lectures by the Ministry, which has resulted in an almost complete stoppage of public meetings, should be given up. Political meetings are best run by political parties, and one of the best ways of maintaining civilian morale would be to break the party-truce and return to normal party politics.

These proposals may seem modest, but if they were all put into effect the results would be remarkable. There are in the Ministry plenty of people who are anxious to make it work and would be able to do so, if they were given the chance. Whether they succeed depends partly on those in control, but even more on the Cabinet.

A LONDON DIARY

LIKE all good Poles, my friend X detests both the Russians and the Germans. He is in the rare position of having authoritative information about conditions in Poland to-day. I asked him about the Nazi occupation. He said it is unimaginable. Warsaw is a dead city; two-thirds of the houses have been damaged or destroyed, there is no business and the only people getting salaries or wages are a certain number of officials and workers engaged in the essential services. Most people have absolutely nothing to do and no money. There is still food to buy; if you have zlotys a hotel will give you a quite good meal at a reasonable price, but few people have any cash left and as there is no business they have no means of getting it. Imagine how we should be in London if the banks and almost all the shops were shut and there was no money in circulation except that which we happened to have in our pockets when the town was captured! Free soup is given once a day to about 300,000 people and there is another distribution of pieces of bread. Jews are excluded from these distributions and a large part of the population is actually starving. The German officials are still civil to the population of Warsaw because the Gestapo has not yet taken charge. In other places the people are being turned out of their houses and allowed to go anywhere they like into the freezing Polish countryside. It is a policy of extermination. Industrial plant has been taken away wholesale into Germany and houses are being systematically plundered for all woollen garments. And what is the Russian occupation like? Different. Landlords and capitalists have been shot and Social-Democrats and other politicians deprived of their jobs. Much of the land is being distributed and not at present collectivised. The Soviet officials are treating the peasants and common people very decently and allowing them a voice in administration. The U.S.S.R. has been generally successful with its treatment of cultural minorities. The Russians also take industrial plant and machinery into the U.S.S.R., but they are not efficient about it and are open to bargaining. The Nazis, he tells me, are extremely venal. You may hang on to your property if you have got enough squeeze. The Bolsheviks are open to different arguments. He gave me two interesting stories which I can well believe. They fit exactly to what I have heard from many other sources about the Russian character. They went to a hospital and demanded that all the radium should be given up. The management protested vehemently and finally persuaded the officials to take only half. Then the nurses came in a body and made a hullabaloo. After listening to their complaints and entreaties for a long time the Russian officials threw up their hands and said "nitchevo" (which, as you know, may be translated "it makes no odds," "nuts," or "to hell with it"). They went off without any radium at all. Then they went to an electrical installation to seize the machinery. One Pole had the bright idea of saying to them: "But, comrades, this machinery is needed by the workers as well as by the bourgeoisie." This seemed a new idea to the Russian officials and they went off scratching their heads and left the machinery where it was.

* * *

In the five days' debate on the King's Speech Commander King-Hall suggested that it would be a good idea for the Government to publish a short edition of Hansard for popular consumption. I agree with Mr. Buchanan, who replied that to edit such a publication would be difficult; all M.P.s would feel, like Mr. Buchanan, infuriated if justice were not done to *their* speeches. Nevertheless, the idea is a good one. Parliament has seldom done so well as during this war. This particular debate was remarkably frank; it included Sir John Simon's outspoken statement about the terrific social changes which will be involved in taxing people to the extent necessary to procure the six or seven million pounds a day that we are spending on the war. Then there were candid, constructive and critical speeches on the deficiencies of the Ministry of Supply and such questions as army pay, family allowances, pensions and the rest. There was a surprising amount of good social information in the speeches of Mr. George Hall, Sir George Schuster, Ellen Wilkinson, Seymour Cox, and a number of others. Mr. Morrison made a frontal attack on recent Ministerial appointments. The debate in short gave us just what the public ought to know. The newspapers report now no more than a fragment of all this. One of the high lights of the debate was a savage attack on Mr. Gallacher and the Communists by Mr. McGovern. It was an anti-war speech and it included the argument that Stalin had always really wanted the war as a way of creating a situation in which the Communists could cash in. Speculations about Stalin's real motives will occupy a great deal of space and time for years to come. It is matter on which nobody can have any real knowledge and therefore an ideal one for heated argument.

* * *

A friend writes to point out that a good deal of doubt was thrown in the United States on the credentials of Krivitsky's book *I Was Stalin's Agent*, which was reviewed in this paper last week. I have made some inquiries from Hamish Hamilton, the publishers of the book, and learnt the following facts. Krivitsky is not the author's real name. This was fairly obvious and is unimportant. Most Communists living abroad

adopt false names, especially if they are secret agents. Krivitsky, I gather, has had a number of names, one of which was S. Ginsberg. Secondly, it is admitted that Ginsberg has had help in writing the book, at least in putting it into good English. The third question is whether he has actually had the experiences recorded in the book or whether they are not rather a compilation of stories from various anti-Bolshevik sources. On this, Hamish Hamilton are completely satisfied with the inquiries made by Harpers in the United States. Ginsberg's *bona fides* are vouched for by Léon Blum and the editor of the *Populaire*, both of whom say they have long known him and give evidence that he was for twenty years in the Russian Secret Service. I notice that the title of "general" has been omitted from the jacket of *I was Stalin's Agent*. I have always assumed that Krivitsky was only styled a general during the war in Spain. Harpers have personally interviewed Ginsberg and he has been a star witness at the Dies inquiry in Washington. Harpers have convinced themselves, after a careful examination of Ginsberg in the presence of lawyers, that he has actually had the experiences recorded. All this leads me to one comment that was made in the review that appeared in this paper last week. I should have dismissed most of Krivitsky's story had there not been a good deal of evidence to support certain parts of it from other reliable sources. It is a highly sensational story; parts of it are only credible because the people whose deaths are described are in fact dead and because they died in circumstances which can be checked up.

* * *

The B.B.C. having started a series of interesting talks about contemporary painting, giving very various points of view, indignant letters are appearing in the *Times*. Mr. Manson has weighed in—quite unnecessarily, I should have thought, since he showed his opinion of modern art clearly enough when Director of the Tate, by hiding so many of the best pictures in the cellars. But the most beautifully Blimpish letter comes from Mr. A. J. Munnings. He paints the horses of the rich in the same style as that in which Mr. de Laszlo painted their faces and their pearls. But his prosperity has not made him indulgent to the comparatively ill-rewarded artists of a younger generation and a less fashionable type. One sentence from his letter I find particularly pleasing and almost a subject for Low: "I found myself listening," he writes, "to Hermann Finck's *In the Shadows*, and I thought to myself here is a much-loved melody which may not be high-brow or 'ultra-modern' but nevertheless is part of life and doesn't need any expounding to make people swallow it." The Royal Academy persistently encourages Finckery in painting, but that does not satisfy Mr. Munnings. Art-critics also, he declares, should encourage the Fincks of the painting-world. These writers, he says, must know "that art must be part of life just like books, the theatre or horse-racing, and that 'art for the people' should need no explaining." Mr. Munnings doubtless considers that no education is required to enjoy the masterpieces of literature and the drama, *Paradise Lost*, for instance, and *King Lear*. But would he trust a man without experience to tell a good horse from a bad one? Or does he think pictures are easier to judge than horses?

* * *

Some confusion is no doubt unavoidable in the switch-over to wartime production, but the complete absence of Government planning which Coventry has lately experienced seems to me unpardonable. Here are the facts. Owing to new Government factories under construction, an influx of 35,000 workers (as well as their families) must now be faced by the Council. On October 14th the Corporation wrote to the Ministry concerned, asking what help it was willing to give in housing this new population. Receiving no reply, it wrote again on the 26th of October, the 3rd of November, and the 13th. On the 15th the Town Clerk received a new request, this time to build houses for another 4,000 workers. In desperation the Corporation wired to the Ministry and received a wire in reply: "Endeavour to reply in next post or two." But up till the end of last week no reply had come. Really it is an extraordinary situation. A city of 240,000 is suddenly told that it is to receive an additional 60,000 people for whom it must provide houses and social services. When it applies for assistance to the Ministry concerned, it receives for two months no reply whatsoever. But meanwhile the Ministry of Health has refused the Corporation permission to go on with the building of 468 council houses which were included in their housing-programme before war broke out. So the factories are going up at record speed and next year the immigrants will arrive to find no accommodation. And now comes the last straw. I understand that the Government are considering hutments as the solution of the problem. Coventry had experience of hutments from 1914-1918, and only last year had managed to clear away the last of them, condemned as noxious slums. Now it is told to get on with building the slums of the next peace. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Beverley Nichols.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

There was a padre I knew in the last war who, whenever he felt depressed, went and sat beside our big howitzers at Ecurie Corner, in the Arras sector, and watched them pumping shells over. It cheered him up, he said.—*Evening News.*

Members wishing to bathe during or immediately after an Air Raid must wear Costumes or Slips, and are particularly requested to dry themselves and dress in their Cubicles and not in the open.—Notice from Royal Automobile Club Swimming Pool.

Suits are made largely of tweed and, where the jacket is long, are nipped in tightly at the waist.

A waist in wartime seems an anomaly, but less so than when accompanied by hips and busts.—*Manchester Guardian.*

Claire Luce, the actress, and I are talking with an R.A.F. padre. He happens to be a particularly bright and amusing kind of parson.

"Miss Luce," he said, "you ought to have some sandwiches with the champagne." Claire, who had been performing for the troops, looks at him gratefully and says, terribly, earnest:

"Padre, you're divine."—*Sunday Pictorial.*

There was one aspect of the work which escaped Lord Raglan's attention. His successor had found a very profitable outlet for his spare time by going round libraries reading books that had not been voluntarily submitted for censorship, and making sure that they were not exceeding the censorship. That was an example of the sort of way in which a job could be properly done and it took time.—Lord Dufferin and Ava in the House of Lords as reported in the *Times*.

WARTIME FARMING AND AFTER

ONE of the things this war has done is to show up even more clearly the contrast between economics and economy so far as agriculture is concerned. At the bidding of economics, we have left large parts of our countryside half-used, and even laid some of it waste, in order to live on the overseas capital represented by stored-up fertility in the virgin lands. It may be good economics to devour the fertility of the New World, while the going lasts, and neglect our own fields. It is certainly not economical. I am in full agreement with those correspondents who have pointed out what a heartbreaking business mixed farming has been since 1922, and farmers in a country primarily organised for industrialists, shipowners, bankers, importers and insurance brokers cannot be blamed if they have adapted themselves to this and played, so far as possible, the same game. The obvious thing to do was to become, if they could, processers themselves of imported raw materials in the form of feeding stuffs grown overseas, carried to Britain and turned into meat and dairy products.

But can the result ultimately justify these means? It is not merely a question of the position in which we now find ourselves in time of war. Indeed, it is easier to justify the system on this score than on many others. It has given us money at home for financing the war and investments abroad that are now most useful for buying, for example, American or Canadian aeroplanes. The fertility of our land has not been dissipated—we have let others make their Dust Bowls—but only put into storage. The plough in time can release it again, and next year will see us far less dependent for our food upon lands overseas, and the year after even less dependent.

Yet one cannot view with equanimity a system that means fields turned into mere animals' playgrounds, broken fences, tumble-down cottages and buildings, and livestock divorced more and more from the soil and concentrated into rural factories where imported feeding stuffs come in at one end and finished meat finally emerges at the other. Is it really quite a good thing that the arts of husbandry should vanish? Whole agricultural districts have arisen where there is not a man left who knows how to cultivate the land, where a steadily diminishing agricultural population knows less and less about the soil as they place themselves more and more in the hands of chemists and "ration experts," who send round the made-up rations with the slickness of purveyors of patent medicines. The system may be all right. But it depends upon a number of things that may not forever remain a sound foundation on which to base our most primary and essential requirement—our food. We know the foundation is an impossible one now we are at war and have to use some of our ships and currency for other things. But it may also be that things will not be quite the same after this war. The currency position then may make heavy importations of feeding stuffs equally undesirable, and if we have had to sell many of our foreign investments, the cheap food will not be returning so easily in the form of interest. Long before this war nations abroad were learning to manufacture for themselves the goods we formerly exported to them. There is certainly no sign of any reversion of this tendency, although there is hope that a new world order will break down some of the trade barriers and enable goods to flow more freely round the world again. But this is rather the hope of a general increase in world wealth and of Britain no longer the only country that will import food on a large scale, than a return to the position in which Britain is the world producer of manufactured goods. In fact, the clearing of the channels of trade would more probably raise the price of food exported from countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A., Holland and Denmark, that have considerable surpluses.

But there is another consideration, and it has for long seemed to me the most important of all. There is a limit to the time during which we can rob the virgin lands of their fertility and consume it as cheap food. Messrs. G. V. Jacks and R. O. Whyte, of Rothamsted Experimental Station, have issued a report dealing with thirty-three countries, and there is not one where harm from soil erosion is not being suffered. The prime cause is greedy farming, squandering the goodness of the earth built up over centuries in the thin film of humus that contains this mystery. In the United States less than one-third of the land surface of that country has been left intact, and there are now huge areas down to virgin rock or rank, unproductive clay. In Canada, South Africa and Australia what was once rich soil has been turned to desert within the memory of comparatively young men, all by bad farming. Diseases are beginning to appear among the flocks and herds of mankind that can be directly attributed to the fact that the raped earth has lost its power to give proper nourishment to animals, and thereby to ourselves. In the name of economics our generation has become the worst spendthrifts that the world has ever seen. The time has come appreciably nearer when Nature will hit back and force of natural circumstances, if nothing else, will compel us to reverse this criminal policy of greed. The only question is whether we shall tread the primrose path of prodigality to the end or whether we shall voluntarily call a halt while there are still men in England who can plough a furrow and raise a corn crop, while there are farms with their buildings, fences and drains and land not foul with weeds or lost under encroaching bracken. We must decide soon, for things will not stand still. The land will become more foul, its equipment fall a little deeper into disrepair; and more farmers and their men driven out of agriculture will mean far greater problems, when the inevitable time arrives, in teaching our people the arts of husbandry again and re-creating a rural civilisation.

I suggest that the deciding moment will be at the end of this war. We have now re-awakened to the fact that we are using our land, our greatest single asset, at probably less than half its capacity and that we need not, for example, comb the West Indies for nut cake and palm kernel so long as we can grow beans and peas in our own fields. It has even dawned on us that if we use modern science to increase the productivity of our grassland by 100, or even 50, per cent., the all-grass dairy farm can be partly ploughed so as to produce some of its other rations and still keep just as many cows with its grass. This is probably shocking economics, but what could come nearer to my dictionary's definition of "economy," which is "good management at home," "frugal and judicious expenditure of money"? The war is making us do all sorts of interesting things. We are now thinking of the humble pig, for instance, in the light of his true function—the farm scavenger who converts waste into meat by living largely upon tail corn and chat potatoes, odd bits of grass, acorns and beech mast in the woods, surplus from the garden and the household. Yet heaven knows how many tens of thousands of tons of potential pig food we normally waste every year in these forms, together with thousands of gallons of whey and enormous quantities of "refuse" from hotels and other dwelling houses, from butchers, fishmongers, bakers and greengrocers. We burn them or dump them while we continue to mine the fertility from the New World and bring it here in ships in order that bankers, rentiers, merchants, shipowners and insurance underwriters may flourish. It would all seem pretty crazy to a visitor from Mars, and the fact that we are now being prevented from doing it on the same scale would probably strike him as the one sane thing in the world to-day.

Similarly we have been brought back, by force of circumstances, to realise that the right place for the hen is on the general farm or the back-garden, where, thoroughly equipped by Nature for roughing it, she can pick up most of her living from grassland and stubble, or from waste food from the household and garden and live under natural, healthy conditions. We can no longer afford to slaughter our cattle just when they are about to realise their greatest potentiality—their ability to convert roughage into first-class beef with the aid of little or no cake or corn. "Baby" beef is not only wasteful; it has not even any flavour. We have been feeding our beef as extravagantly as our dairy cows and wasting foodstuffs in trying to turn dairy calves into beef when their true function is veal. Again, war conditions are putting a stop to this extravagant folly and the grazier is being encouraged again to show his true art of producing good beef economically.

In one way and another, we are becoming a nation of mixed farmers again. Our land is returning to its old productivity (which science could enhance to a degree never before visualised), and we are thinking of farming in terms of economy instead of economics. Influences now being set in motion may well compel us to continue in these ways when the war is over; other considerations may impel us to choose the same course even if it were possible to revert to the old methods. In any case it looks as if the end of the war will be the time when the fate of British agriculture is settled for many years ahead. At the risk of repetition, I would again urge farmers to do now all they possibly can to consolidate the ground that the Führer has won for them and base their claims for the future not on wartime services rendered, but on peacetime services they will be able to give, on efficiency, hard sense and consideration for the consumer.

L. F. EASTERBROOK

DEFENCELESS ALLY

IN Prague, on November 16th, 17th and 18th, the Germans carried out a massacre of Czech students. Armed German civilians and police raided the Charles University, the cultural and sporting clubs and the dormitories of various colleges. Some of the students they shot or tortured on the spot, others were taken off to the Petschek Bank—now headquarters of the Gestapo—and to the prison at Pankrac; and in the barracks of Ruzyne the Germans shot several Czech students before the eyes of their fellow-students. Germans have killed well over a hundred Czech students, and they have carried off in lorries to Germany some 8,000 more. . . . When the news of this came through, most British people felt horror, and some felt shame. But then, I find, a good many put the hideous affair from them, saying with a sigh: "Oh well, the revolt came too soon. Poor Czechs! But how foolish of them not to have waited."

"The revolt"? What revolt? To leap to the conclusion that there has been a futile revolt in the so-called Protectorate is natural, but it is just what Hitler must wish us to do—to underrate both the cold-bloodedness of the Nazis and the sustained contribution which the Czech people are making towards their defeat. The facts are as follows.

There has been no revolt. What happened in Prague on October 28th was that a peaceful crowd of Czechs, dressed in their Sunday clothes, filled the main streets and squares. That was all, until armed German hooligans attacked this peaceful and sad crowd. Karl Hermann Frank, the Sudeten German whom Hitler installed as State Secretary for the "Protectorate," rode into the Karlovo Namesti, whip in hand, at the head of a band of Germans. Over fifty shots were fired, and a young medical student, Jan Opletal, was mortally wounded. On the day of his funeral, when a crowd of students stood singing anthems in Old Town Square, German civilians holding revolvers forced Czech policemen to interfere with them. Then, next day, came the raid on the Charles University . . .

Since there was no revolt, what caused all this brutality? Some say that Karl Hermann Frank was determined to clear the Czechs out of Bohemia: he therefore wrecked every attempt made by the "Protector," Herr von Neurath, to conciliate the Czechs. The "Protector" had just proposed to President Hacha that the Czechs should have some degree of independence and a revised frontier, in return for a clear and binding declaration of loyalty to Hitler. Hacha refused to go again to Berlin, but some think that von Neurath would have gone on with the negotiations, and that it was to stop them that Frank ran amok. Do things really happen like that in the Third Reich? Frank had already run amok in June, at Kladno. If Hitler seriously meant to conciliate the Czechs, would he have left Karl Hermann Frank in power over them? By now it is clear that von Neurath is in Prague not to restrain Frank and the Gestapo but to cover them, not to conciliate the Czechs but to appear to do so. The real reasons why Hitler has martyred the students of Prague are quite clear. First, he hoped to prevent, or to render futile, an eventual revolt of the Czechs by destroying their intelligentsia. In this he will fail, because (as I could see last year) the Czech people's understanding and love of liberty does not depend on the intelligentsia. But, secondly, Hitler's persecution of the Czech students is a ghastly extension of the weapon of hostages. And the motives for using it are two: one is the fear of what the Czechs might achieve one day when revolt should cease to be premature; the other is to stop the sabotage by which the Czechs have already been rendering a major aid to the Allies.

That sounds an exaggeration. But is it? Take this fact alone: since this war started the Czechs have by sabotage reduced the output of Skoda by 30 per cent. If we knew that our blockade had done that, we should account it a notable success. It is only one of many instances of the Czechs effectively resisting the Nazis. The Ides of March 1939, stunned the Czechs: they could not believe in so complete a triumph of evil. For weeks most of them were dazed; and in those weeks the *Ordners* of Henlein and the Gestapo carried out wholesale arrests, based on lists prepared beforehand. But gradually the Czechs came to. Their corps of officers was intact, and it began to work feverishly upon the jobs that were most urgent—saving war material from falling into German hands, saving the persons required for work abroad, and preparing the groundwork for an army to be formed in France. Hundreds of Czech and Slovak specialists escaped with essential documents. Many went hidden in goods trains: then later some went out through the underground galleries of the mines of Ostrava, through forests, or over mountain-paths. Sometimes even members of the Gestapo helped a Czech to escape, asking him only to remember that not all Germans are depraved. All this time the "Mafia," which in well-kept secrecy organises resistance, was getting into its stride. The Mafia had first to build up, and has now to maintain, contact between Prague and the other towns of the "Protectorate," contact with Slovakia and contact with Czechoslovaks working abroad. Again, it gets printed and distributed wave after wave of leaflets and news-sheets, and this so secretly and yet on such a scale that of one speech made by Dr. Benes in America over a million copies were distributed in the "Protectorate"—a copy for every seven people! Again, it organises listening-in to foreign broadcasts; that is to say, it gives notice in advance of important speeches; and when the Nazis punished this listening-in with death and confiscated many wireless sets, it had reports of broadcasts distributed. It runs secret transmitters also. It counters in many cases the action of the Gestapo: many times, for instance, a Czech will be warned to stay away from his house because the Gestapo is about to visit it, and sometimes his family and his most necessary possessions are got away in good time. Above all, the Mafia organises passive resistance in the railway and other public services, active sabotage in the armament factories. The Germans find a troop train, or a train laden with munitions or food, delayed again and again, always with a good excuse—it must wait for an oncoming express, which is, of course, late, or there is a shortage of railwaymen or a defect in the rolling-stock. As for the armament factories, the Germans have had to install a three-fold watch in each workshop, but still the sabotage goes on. Not only that, but there disappeared in two months from one machine-gun factory enough parts to make forty-five machine-guns; and from one dump, between March 15th and July 1st, there disappeared a thousand grenades. If the Germans arrest these Czech workers, production falls off for lack of skilled workers. If not, the sabotage and smuggling goes on. In short, instead of indulging in futile gestures of revolt, the Czechs have scientifically organised a really effective contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

But the risks to them are hideous, and their courage is of the hardest sort. The men who fight in a British warship or a French machine-gun post are risking their own lives: the Czechs who do the sabotage in the works of Skoda or distribute news in a Bohemian village are risking death or torture not only for themselves but for their families and for the flower of their country's youth and talent. As soon as the war started, the Germans arrested as hostages all those who meant most to Czech culture. That did not demoralise the Mafia and the workers, so now the Germans massacre and deport students. Though this is the worst so far, it is not all: the Czechs have to carry on in face of economic misery as well, and every success of the British blockade hits not only the enemy but the Czech people, our defenceless ally.

Running these unequalled risks, naturally the Czechs within the "Protectorate" watch jealously what goes on in Great Britain and in France. Most of them feel that France and Great Britain betrayed them in September, 1938, and again in March, 1939; it would not take much to persuade them that we were betraying them yet again. Meanwhile the Czechs,

like the Serbs, have an old emotional attraction towards Russia, whether Communist or Tsarist. The two forces—Pan-Slavism and distrust of the Western democracies—work together; and already the Russians have been exploiting them through the Czechs who took refuge in Moscow. In the "Protectorate" the one rival to Benes is Stalin. And every statement of British and French war aims must take into account this possibility: that Russia may make to the Czechs what may seem a better—or a firmer—offer.

JONATHAN GRIFFIN

THOUGHTS ON THE BLACK-OUT

A NUMBER of people seem to be enjoying the black-out. Some of them do so in the spirit of Mark Tapley, despising so trivial a challenge to their cheerfulness. Others go about in the mood of adventurers for whom the darkness has transformed cities into the likeness of a primeval jungle. Then there are the aesthetes who like looking at stars and seeing hideous streets translated into a strange beauty by moonlight. I belong to none of these factions. Doubtful though I am of the beneficence of many of man's inventions, I am a devotee of artificial light.

I see that some of the black-out party are rejoicing in the fact (if it is a fact) that we are recovering one of our lost senses—the sense that enables the Red Indian to find his way through the woods by night. But why should we want to be turned into Red Indians? It was the fashion in the eighteenth century to admire the noble savage, but, when our ancestors were noble savages, they spent laborious generations trying to escape from their condition. They had various senses that we have not, but they gladly got rid of them in exchange for a little civilisation. Possibly, like some African tribes, they were able to communicate news at long distances almost as fast as we can communicate it by telegram and telephone. But who would give up the telegram and the telephone merely in order to recover the gift of hearing news by the methods of the African forest? I have never read a description of savage life that made me envious of the savage. He may be able to see in the dark, but I hold that the best way to see in the dark is to flood it with lamplight.

As for adventures, I can easily think of more engaging adventures than falling over a sandbag or unexpectedly stepping off the kerb in the dark and twisting an ankle. After all, if adventures of this kind are worth having, we could have them in peacetime in the home. All we have to do is never to have any light in the house after nightfall and to have plenty of furniture scattered about over which we might trip or against which we might bark our shins. Darkness can turn the most humble house into a booby-trap. We could invite our friends to darkness parties and hear them cursing as they missed a step or crashed into a table. On the whole, however, I believe that life is more varied and enjoyable in a well-lit house than in a dark house. That is why man originally decided that the world-old black-out of night, being a nuisance, must as far as was possible be mitigated.

Again, I hold that brighter stars are a poor compensation for the loss of arc-lamps. I yield to no one, as an orator might say, in my admiration of the stars, but in a town I think they look best by electric light. The common report that in ordinary times you cannot see the stars in London is a myth. Many people are now seeing the stars for the first time, not because they were not visible before, but because in the black-out there is nothing else to see. As for the moon, I grant that London by moonlight in the black-out is more beautiful than London in peacetime. But this is largely because most of London is too ugly to bear being looked at in detail by strong lamplight. Moonlight, which conceals as much as it reveals, fills even the dullest street with a curious glamour. The slate roof of a Victorian public-house falls under its enchantment no less than the dome of St. Paul's. Moonlight is the great leveller. Mystery takes the place of bad architecture, and the worst statues become masterpieces of Phidias. This means only, however, that we enjoy being deceived. The moonlit London that we see in the black-out is mainly a lie. I can imagine nothing that would more effectively slow down the movement for building a more beautiful London than a perpetual black-out steeped in perpetual moonlight.

To me, indeed, the black-out is almost wholly abominable. I dislike it equally in the town and in the country. I like seeing lighted windows as much as looking up at Orion's Belt or the Pleiades. The sight of the stars is more exalting, but the lighted windows are homelier. A village completely blacked-out without a single window telling of a lamp lit in a room is to me a village half-dead or all asleep. The very inn has ceased to have its beacon, lovely and inviting as a harbour-light. If I attempted to reach it without a torch I should more likely than not walk into a pond or ditch. Even when I approach the cottage I know, I cannot find the gate in the worst kind of darkness except by torchlight. I have the sensation as I go along the road that I am a blind man walking in a tunnel. In town I would rather walk a mile by daylight than a furlong in the black-out. Others, mostly of the younger generation, seem more able to adapt their sight to the darkness, and you will find office-boys running through the pitch of Fleet Street without torches to guide them. I carry a torch, indeed, not merely in order to see my way, but in order to prevent myself from being run into by these nocturnal sprinters. It is a source of constant surprise to me, however, to see what a large proportion of Londoners walk gaily along the pavement without the aid of torchlight. Ghostly figures, they step out with the assurance of gods and goddesses in the streets of Paradise. Breaks in the pavement, lamp-posts, sandbags, houses jutting out farther into the street than their neighbours, they seem to know and outwit by instinct, whereas to me a walk in the black-out is one long obstacle race.

Nor do I find driving through the black-out much pleasanter. The first night on which I took a taxi home from town after dark I felt as strange as though I had been lost somewhere in Central Africa. We drove by a route along which I know every turn and every street-corner but, if I had been offered a thousand pounds at any point to say where we were, I could not have told. The next night the taxi-driver, blinder even than I was, twice after reaching a cross-roads took the wrong turning and began to drive me back towards the centre of town. Luckily, some instinct came to my aid, and I persuaded him to get out of his seat and go and look for the Cobden Statue with his torch. He found it, and after that the road home was simple. A friend of mine maintains that anyone who finds it difficult to drive in the black-out is not fit to hold a driving licence. I do not quite agree with him. It is easy enough, I admit, to drive along the main streets, especially now that better lighting on cars is allowed. But choose the circuitous and unfrequented routes beloved by some taxi-drivers, and you will lose your way as easily as if you had never been in London before. Take a taxi, for example, from Baker Street via Regent's Park and Primrose Hill to Hampstead on a night of pouring rain during the dark of the moon and you will go through a familiar world utterly blotted out in darkness inspissated. On arriving home on such a night I asked the driver how he found his way about in the blackness. "Instinct," he said; "pure instinct." I had almost guessed that. He seemed to me on several occasions instinctively to have just missed driving into lamp-posts and letter-boxes and other cars.

If I am alive when the war is over, I hope to found a society for the perpetuation of the memory of all the men who invented any sort of light. The rushlight, the taper, the candle, the match, the oil-lamp, gas, electricity—they will all be duly honoured and the inventor of each of them toasted at an annual feast. Most of them, I suppose, are, like many excellent poems, the work of Anon.; but Signor Volta and Herr Ohm we shall be able to toast by name. They, like Anon. are heroic figures in man's ancient fight against Nature's

black-out—a fight in which the first success occurred when someone in an inspired moment rubbed two sticks together and produced fire. Soon it became clear that it was possible to defeat the Satanic blackness by man-made luminaries and to enjoy continuous light if this were desired. Winter could be turned into a second summer by bringing lamps into a room. Every house had its own sun after dark, and outside in the streets with their lamps night was no longer night, but a veiled day. The very trees in the parks were lit up with a new nocturnal beauty, and rivers with the lamps reflected in them were lovelier at midnight even than under the sun of noon. A lighted seaport, a lighted ship—when we see them, we realise how profound is the passion for light with which we are born. Lighten our darkness—it is what man has been struggling for at his best through the centuries. And now, instead, we are stumbling over sandbags in the dark. Strange that the human race should allow one demented man to rob it of the illumination it had so hardly won. He may boast that he has enabled us to see London by moonlight, but as for me, I would rather have back my volts and my ohms.

Y. Y.

Miscellany

ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE

IT has long been evident to far-sighted and enlightened people in this country, that the time has come and was indeed overdue when the Government of this country would have to make itself responsible for measures to be taken to safeguard our cultured inheritance, to extend its accessibility to the people at large and also not only to preserve what our forefathers had achieved but to ensure that fresh achievements were possible and that there should be no decline in the general culture of our population.

Even during the nineteenth century when the fruits of our early entry upon the industrial revolution were still pouring into this country on a colossal scale and enriching numbers of private individuals, the private benevolence and public spiritedness of a large minority were not sufficient to maintain, still less to develop, our inherited culture. Merchants, manufacturers and banks were far more interested in investing their immense profits in financing the building of railways, tramways, waterworks, etc., in Brazil, Argentine, China, Egypt and other parts of the world than in rebuilding our towns, rehousing our own people, improving our own transport and other internal civilised necessities. If our industrialists and financiers were in the main so indifferent to the conditions of the physical life of the majority of the population in their own country, it is hardly surprising that they gave little thought to their own or their neighbours' cultural life. The warnings of social reformers like Carlyle, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold were largely disregarded if not derided with the result that the state of things in Great Britain up to the beginning of the twentieth century may, without exaggeration, be described as appalling.

I well remember as a very young man going for the first time to Germany several years before the last war. I knew that I was going from the then richest country in the world (England) to a newer state and what did I see? Instead of the hideous industrial cities and the beggarly towns of my own country—all with the exception of Manchester, and perhaps London, devoid of all the cultural amenities of social life—I found myself in a country abounding in cities and towns superior not only architecturally but in every respect to those of my own land, nearly all of which were provided with State or municipally endowed opera houses, theatres, concert halls and orchestras. In all these cities—the smallest of which had cultural facilities superior to that of London—the poorest citizen was able to enjoy dramatic and musical performances of the highest quality at incredibly cheap prices.

When the last war came we were temporarily quickened into a new awareness of our social imperfections. Many began to ask themselves what is the use of a nation being nominally rich—rich in the possession of pieces of paper, acknowledging the indebtedness to us of far-off foreign countries if we meanwhile sit in poverty, discomfort and without enjoyment? The rich might find an illusory comfort in reading over the lists of their investments abroad, but the average citizen had not even this compensation for the dullness of his life.

Now this fresh war has come and we have immediately seen the possibility of such precariously maintained cultural life as we possess swept completely away. The actors and musicians have hastily attempted to devise work which will keep them employed, and I now see in the *Times* of December 12th, that an Art and Entertainment Emergency Council has been set-up and held its first meeting in the National Gallery. This Council has no doubt been inspired by Sir Kenneth Clark, who had the excellent idea of arranging a series of concerts at the National Gallery after the war began. These concerts have been so successful—to the surprise of many faint-hearted people—that I understand that a profit has been made. This fact will awaken enterprise in many quarters; which is all to the good, seeing that the concerts were distinctly *not* the sort of cheap low-brow entertainment which some people erroneously think is what everybody wants.

The objects of this new Council (which includes some names which inspire confidence) as stated in the *Times*, are: "To foster and preserve British cultural services, to promote the interests of cultural workers and to provide entertainment and cultural education through the co-operation of members of the art and entertainment professions." This estimable purpose will no doubt be fulfilled to some extent, but the limited resources of such a body as well as its character, are likely to make it little better than a stop-gap organisation which will provide some organised employment for artists during the period of the war.

Now, something much more important and of a less ephemeral nature is demanded. I cannot see this Council preventing the possibly early break-up of the London Philharmonic Orchestra for example; or maintaining the existence of such a valuable body as the English Folk-Dance and Song Society, whose small subsidy was suspended on the outbreak of war. These are only two examples of most valuable bodies whose existence is already threatened. In both cases they represent many years of uninterrupted labour and if allowed to perish it would take as least a decade to build them up again. A first-class orchestra cannot be created in a day, and a lifetime's work, such as the late Cecil Sharp's English Folk-Dance and Song Society, might be destroyed for ever.

Now it seems to me that if the Government spends a vast sum, amounting to millions per annum, on national education of children up to the age of 15, and has already shouldered the responsibility of further technical education, it should now assume the equally important task of assisting the cultural and emotional education of the young after they have left school. This would be infinitely less costly, because it is in the nature of entertainment for which they would very willingly pay if only it were made available. I am perfectly certain that the Board of Education has already recognised the need and is perfectly willing to prepare a scheme to tackle this problem. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Mr. Kenneth Lindsay, made an admirable speech in the House on November 16th last in which he said:—

> I want to make one remark about the subject of adult education, because this is particularly important. It looks as if there will be something like a 70 per cent. enrolment of students for the Workers Education Association, and University Extension classes and that is an amazing thing to be happening at this time. The fact is that in its provision for younger people there are large gaps. There is a large number of people in this country, men and women, who do not so much want to sit down in a class as to take part in practical crafts, in designing, in music and drama. Incidentally, there is also a very

large number of professional musicians, artists and actors who are out of work. . . .

Mr. Lindsay went on to praise persons such as Sir Kenneth Clark, who have been struggling "to keep alive what we shyly call culture in this country." He then continued:—

The Board feel that we are faced with an urgent problem in this respect . . . we have come to the conclusion that we may have to consider with the Board taking the initiative in this matter. I have always thought that the Board should be something wider than merely a place for looking after schools and examinations. . . .

These are brave enlightened words and I hope they may prove to be historic and that in the future we shall look back upon them as heralding a new and great cultural age such as that which followed the Renaissance. W. J. TURNER

THEIR EXCELLENCIES

THE stage of chivalry is gone,
Glib speech and predicated sob,
And now the cast we gaped upon
Is down and howling with the mob.

But still polite and obdurate
The high and hidden diplomats
Hold up the old backcloths and wait
Like scene-shifters, dispassionate.

Above their heads unheeded clang
The hub-bub bells of a new day,
Under their stony eyelids hang
The icicles of memory. W. R. RODGERS

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Great Expectations," at the Rudolf Steiner Hall

The Actors' Company is composed of a group of actors and actresses, producers and designers who are putting on new plays by younger dramatists and old classics at the Rudolf Steiner Hall (near Baker Street Station), which is easy to reach in the black-out and offers good seats at low prices. It is an interesting enterprise which has attracted players who love their art and motley. Thus the public can count on good acting, and on productions which make the very most of the means at the management's disposal. The Actors' Company opened last Thursday with a stage adaptation of *Great Expectations* by Mr. Alec Guinness, who also plays the part of the amiable and airy Herbert Pocket in a manner which would have given Dickens himself complete satisfaction. The two other remarkable performances were Miss Marita Hunt's Miss Havisham and Mr. Marius Goring's Pip—the grown-up Pip; the boy Pip was well played by Master Roger Parker on the first night.

It is difficult to judge how this stage adaptation would strike those who have not read the book, probably as tantalising, and the characterisation might seem both original and scrappy. The Miss Haversham scenes would impress them as strangely imaginative; the scene in Joe Gargery's cottage as tame, and the scenes in Act III as bewildering and in parts sentimentally sensational. The motives of several of the characters would be obscure, in spite of the passages read between scenes from the book. But to readers of *Great Expectations*, all is clear enough. Like so many of Dickens's stories, *Great Expectations* contains intensely dramatic scenes, such as the return of the convict Magwick and his discovery of himself as Pip's benefactor late at night in the latter's chambers in the Temple. But the book is essentially a panorama. The plot cannot be dramatised without alteration, and without omitting most of the incidents which make the novel memorable. The theme is the story of a poor child (the brother-in-law of a saintly simpleton of a blacksmith) who, having been adopted by an unknown benefactor, becomes a snob and neglects his old friends; but when he discovers that he owes everything to an escaped convict, behaves well, sheds his snobbishness and goes back, after losing his money, to plain living and right feeling. Pip's psychology has to be foreshortened to next to nothing on the stage, if the melodrama of Magwick and the mystery of Estella's birth are to be kept—the Dickens's "plot." Hence Mr. Guinness's difficulties. He has "illustrated" *Great Expectations* rather than dramatised it, and in a way which should give pleasure to Dickens fans.

The next item on the Actors' Company's programme is *King John*, a play very seldom acted, and one of which the Company with the talent at its disposal ought to make a great success. Add to the names already mentioned two others: Miss Merula Salaman, whose complete self-absorption in the smaller parts hitherto allotted to her points to exceptional promise, and Mr. Alan Sykes.

"Othello," at Sadler's Wells

Verdi's *Othello* has been revived with new scenery. Mr. McKnight Kauffer's superb sets were in the possession of the Vic-Wells company, and we venture to ask—without much hope of an answer—what has happened to them. If they have, very improvidently, been destroyed, the designs presumably exist. Why, then, have they not been re-executed? If we ask these questions, it is not from ill-will towards Mr. Robert Medley, who has designed the new sets. Indeed, we think it showed good taste and enterprise to commission Mr. Medley, who is one of the most promising of our younger artists, and we hope that the Vic-Wells management will persevere in employing designers of this calibre. Hitherto most of the opera decors have been lamentable. Mr. Medley's set for the first act is not very felicitous: since it is shown chiefly by lightning-flashes the silhouette of the buildings should have been his first consideration, and this silhouette is rather commonplace. But the second set is interesting and original. Certainly it will not please all tastes, but the colour seems to us admirably ominous, while the mixture of Arabic, Gothic and Romanesque styles in the architecture is ingeniously indicative of the Eastern Mediterranean setting. In the last act, owing doubtless to economy, we are given only black curtains, together with an eighteenth-century table and a lamp in stained glass which contrives to look both Ye Olde and Modernistic. Desdemona, moreover, sits up in bed, while waiting to be murdered, as if she were sipping her early morning tea. Miss Joan Cross in this role surpasses herself. She has a more beautiful voice and is a better artist than most of the *soprani* heard in recent years at Covent Garden. Mr. John Wright has a splendid appearance as Othello—he looks the noblest Aethiop of them all—and he sings beautifully in the tender passages; but his voice has not the heroic ringing tones necessary for this part. As Iago, Mr. Redvers Llewellyn looks a *faux bonhomme*, which is dramatically effective. He sings well, but is handicapped by his clothes. (Mr. Medley is responsible only for the scenery.) The orchestral playing was rather coarse, but the production can be heartily commended. *Othello* is one of the liveliest, most moving and most aesthetically satisfactory of all operas, while Miss Joan Cross's performance would be a credit to any opera house in the world.

"The Little Revue" (3rd Edition), at the Little Theatre

This exemplary Revue continues to enjoy a popularity which disproves the notion that wartime entertainment ought to be brainless. The wit throughout is château-bottled, and Miss Hermione Baddeley has returned to the cast in terrific form. Mr. Cyril Ritchard has unfortunately departed, but Miss Joyce Grenfell has a new and brilliantly enjoyable monologue as the head girl of a school. This does not trespass on Mr. Arthur Marshall's ground, for she is subtly naturalistic where he is dramatically satirical. *Even Hitler Had a Mother* and *That is the End of the News* are excellent topical numbers, and we were inexpressibly happy to hear the adorable Miss Charlotte Lee singing once more *My Bosom is a Belfry*. (Could we not also have her Philomel song from the old Gate Revue?) A new and elaborate scene showing nightgowned young ladies in a thunderstorm seems the only concession to the supposed taste of the troops. Mr. Bernard Miles and Mr. Hedley Briggs now add to the gaiety, and this is a Revue worth seeing several times.

The Marx Brothers at the Circus, at the Empire
Our Neighbours, The Carters—At the Plaza
First Love, at the Leicester Square

The Marx Brothers at the Circus are, of course, very like the Marx Brothers at the races or at the opera, or anywhere else, which is nothing to complain about, but it is a pity that so many of the details of this film resemble their two previous productions. The plot still vaguely concerns a singer, this time provided with very poor material both by the script and by nature. Harpo still plays his harp to enraptured negroes, Chico's fingers still dance on the piano keyboard; all a little too familiar. But there

is some superb fun; Harpo's seal playing draughts, Groucho walking on the ceiling, Chico singing lullabies to the strong man and an uproarious finale. Groucho introduces a complete circus into Margaret Dumont's musical soirée for America's four hundred (398, 399, 400, Groucho counts the guests) and of course involves everyone in the performance. The circus ring is where by tradition the Marx Brothers belong, with the Fratellinis and the world's best clowns, and to see them swinging on a trapeze, running with the clowns, and firing Margaret Dumont from a cannon, reminds us of the real origin of their humour, which is by no means specifically modern as the surrealist interpreters of it would like to suggest. Margaret Dumont appears far too late and too infrequently in the film. The film will more than satisfy confirmed Marxists but probably won't recruit any fresh party members.

Our Neighbours, The Carters, are a family, *genre* Hardy, but more numerous, father, mother, and five children in fact. The story supports the new favourite in film social theories, that the rich are usually barren and miserable while real happiness lies in the heavily mortgaged homes of the prolific lower middle classes. "Doc" Carter owns an old-fashioned drug store which does very nicely until a cut-rate concern gets an eye on his premises and runs him out of business. Luckily the Carters know a very rich, very unhappy and totally barren couple who put everything right. The film is delightfully acted by Fay Bainter and Frank Craven and all the five children who are certainly the nicest family the cinema has so far introduced.

First Love is *Cinderella* in Manhattan, arranged to display Miss Deanna Durbin. Messrs. Kosta and Pasternak have produced a first-rate Christmas entertainment. The details are charmingly fanciful: the two ugly sisters are represented by a far from ugly but wonderfully intolerable *café* society belle, and her lymphatic brother; the fairy-godmother is the butler and domestic staff of her home; the white mice are traffic-cops on their motor-bicycles; the prince (is it necessary to add?) is at least as rich as he is handsome, and by no means a fairy. Miss Durbin sings *Home Sweet Home*, a Strauss waltz and the big aria from *Madam Butterfly*, and sings them very well. She remains an agreeably unaffected actress. All the acting is highly accomplished, particularly that of Mr. Lewis Howard, Miss Kathleen Howard and Miss Helen Pairish. Slick, gay and sweet without being sugary.

Contemporary English Paintings at Wildenstein's

As has now become usual in exhibitions of our younger painters, the most arresting and accomplished pictures in this show are by Graham Sutherland, Rodrigo Moynihan and Victor Pasmore. Mr. Sutherland is the most original of the three: he has learnt from both Samuel Palmer and Picasso, but his rich romantic landscapes are highly personal and show a decisiveness that is rare among English painters. Mr. Moynihan is evidently less imaginative, and in such pictures as the brilliantly painted *Ham* his material affinity with Manet is conspicuous. The landscape in this exhibition is one of the most satisfactory pictures in construction, texture and colour that he or any of his contemporaries has produced. Mr. Pasmore's strength is his sensibility to colour and tone, his weakness an inclination to leave his pictures when they are only sketches. *The Quiet River* is carried further than usual, and represents his rare and delicate gift at its finest. *Leicester Square at Night* is a nocturne suggestive of his temperamental likeness to Whistler. He follows Verlaine's advice about the paramount importance of the hint and the nuance. Mr. Graham Bell's *Nude* is a study rather than a picture, but it is a most serious and honourable work. In *Banks of the Seine* he shows a new and very welcome and well managed gaiety of colour. The figures in *Dublin* are excellently placed, but they seem to be frozen by Medusa to the ground instead of on the move. Mr. Gowing's sleeping boy is very much alive, so is the subject of Mr. Lynton Lamb's portrait, and *Mrs. Stanley-Clarke* by Anthony Devas is an excellent specimen of the portrait that is factual, pleasing and effective. His *Eliza* is also good in a specifically English way. Miss Ethel Walker's donkeys and Mr. Le Bas's *Rye Harbour* are charming examples of these painters, and Mr. Pitchforth develops new territory in an odd satirical picture of paunchy bathers playing leap-frog. Altogether a heartening exhibition. And on the way out do not fail to examine the Degas and the Pissarro. The latter is unusual in subject, and a most delicate, touching picture, with a hand in it prophetic of the early Picasso. The Degas pastel has a specially bold and splendid design, while the colour and drawing make one wonder again whether Degas was not the most masterly of all the nineteenth-century painters.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, December 15th—
"Impressions of London," Exhibition of Water-colours and Drawings, Avenue Studios, 76 Fulham Road, to December 20th
Fabian Nursery At Home to members of "Young Czechoslovakia," 59 Aberdare Gardens, N.W.6, 6.30.
Fabian Christmas Dance, Burlington Galleries, 7.30. Tickets 3s. single, 5s. double.

SATURDAY, December 16th—
Women's Peace Campaign Meeting, Central Hall, Westminster, 2.30. Speakers include: Miss Vera Brittain, Dame Sybil Thorndike and Miss Ruth Fry.

SUNDAY, December 17th—
Dr. C. E. M. Joad: "What Has Happened to Progress?" Conway Hall, 11.
Beecham Sunday Concert, Queens Hall, 2.45.
Fifth Popular Concert, Embassy Theatre, 3.
Mass Meeting of Socialist Party of Gt. Britain, Conway Hall, 6.30.

MONDAY, December 18th—
Lorna Davis: Lunch Hour Poetry Recital, Central Hall, Westminster, 1.15. Collection for British Red Cross.
Public Meeting: "Animals in Time of War," Caxton Hall, 3.

TUESDAY, December 19th—
Dan Rider: "Rent Policy in This War and the Last," Housing Centre, 1.
"Mandragola," a comedy by Machiavelli, Mercury.
"The Corn is Green," Piccadilly.

WEDNESDAY, December 20th—
Federal Union Inaugural Lunch, Old Cock Tavern, Fleet Street, 1. Speaker: Charles Kimber.
"All Clear," Queens.
"Major Barbara," Westminster.

Correspondence

THE INVASION OF FINLAND

SIR,—From the moral standpoint the Finnish invasion by the U.S.S.R. is indefensible and bitterly regretted by her warmest friends.

The calamity is the greater because, prior to these events, the Soviet Union was the one great Power which from its inception has pursued consistently a moral course in international affairs, and had won and was winning the affection of millions of workers and democrats throughout the world. Litvinov's speeches before and after Russia had joined the League of Nations are the proof: it is on account of their acknowledged correctness that they can so effectively be turned against Russia now.

It is foolish, however, to blind ourselves to the hard realities of our imperfect world. We all live in an immoral order and if the League became ineffective our government was most to blame. Our ruling class were anxious to banish, in the phrase of Professor Arnold Toynbee, this piece of Anglo-Saxon bric-à-brac to the lumber room.

Why, then, did not Russia state the facts bluntly and say: We endeavoured to make the League a success and achieve collective security. Chamberlain's government would have none of it. We are therefore forced back to the jungle. We must prepare ourselves against the attack of world capitalism upon the success of our Socialist State. We must close those gates where powerful invaders may enter through small neighbouring states. This we have done in Estonia, and Latvia and now we seek in Finland, in return for compensation, certain strategic bases essential for our security. First, the protection of Leningrad, where a quarter of our industrial activity is situated, by control of its approaches on the sea through the Gulf of Finland and by removal of a frontier which lies only 17 miles from Leningrad itself. Second, the protection of the narrow ice-free channel leading to Murmansk in the north by control of the Fisherman's Peninsula which commands its Atlantic approaches as Gibraltar commands the approaches to the Mediterranean Sea. We are trustees for the world's first Socialist State. These are securities we must have and if necessary we shall fight for them.

An honest statement to that effect would at least have commanded respect, for the demands were not in themselves unreasonable in view of the world tension and the ill-disguised hostility of capitalist governments. Should we, for instance, allow Shoeburyness to be occupied by a Holland hostile to ourselves

and favourable to Germany? Why then the flimsy excuses which antagonise us all. No honest man believes that the Soviet Government acted because Soviet soldiers had been attacked by Finns, or that Finns had appealed for help against their own Government.

This lack of fundamental honesty of statement which nauseates the average Englishman reveals great gaps in Russia's civilised code and shows that despite her great achievements she has much to learn from Western culture, as we have much to learn from her.

It is indeed just because we so need to learn from the positive Soviet achievements that Soviet aggression comes as a double blow to-day and calls for clear thinking on the part of all progressives. Those especially who had become sympathetic to the Soviet Union must avoid the folly of the disillusioned friend who becomes blind to the virtue which originally attracted him on discovering the weakness he had never suspected. The Russian achievements remain. I have dealt with them elsewhere, and the line-up by the influential capitalist press of the world is due less to the fact that she has attacked a small nation, than that she has achieved the abolition of exploitation of man by man and struck a blow at the heart of the capitalist order. When indeed did we see the same unanimity concerning the fate of Abyssinia, Czecho-Slovakia, Spain or China? The very week which recorded the death of 65 civilians in the capital of Finland by aerial bombs, recorded 2,000 deaths in a similar raid on the capital of China. It passed without comment, though the things Russia seeks of Finland are vastly more vital to her safety than the things Japan seeks of China.

The task of progressives is indeed a double one. Whilst honestly protesting against this latest aggression and its mode, they must avoid with all their might participation in efforts after a combined attack upon the Soviet Union. Nor must they be deterred from examining and learning from the Russian experiment. The Russians, as I wrote before any of this happened, "after all, are human beings, with all the weaknesses and follies and sins that mar us; and the relics of the past—and it is a worse past than ours—still hang around their necks." They have appropriated many aspects of Christian morality, but lack essential Christian qualities and are likely to lack more. We have these qualities but lack what Russia has appropriated. They have therefore much to learn and much to receive as well as much to give and so have we. A world crusade against the Soviet Union would benefit neither her nor us. Reaction in the one and totalitarian intolerance in the other could be the only result.

HEWLETT JOHNSON

SIR,—Perhaps I am an innocent abroad, but I have never read so much learned nonsense to the column about Communist policy as was written by your correspondents last week. I was unaware, up till then, that the Soviet Union had been pursuing anything else but a policy based on power politics; indeed, I had not noticed that there was any other kind. Collective security lined up the "satisfied" Powers (and therefore peace-loving) against the "dissatisfied" disturbers of the peace, who had nothing. In the coarse words to which all the fine phrases of diplomacy eventually lead to, the Soviet Union said to the other Powers: we all have something the Fascist Powers want—why not all combine to make sure they don't get it? Mr. Chamberlain, however, would not have this, and said it was better to appease the Fascist nations with smaller nations. The position now with the Russian-German Pact is reversed. Mr. Chamberlain is appealing for collective action and Germany is appeasing the Russian bear with small nations. Previously, and I believe even yet, your correspondents would have us believe that there is something intrinsically just about the British Empire dominating 300 million Hindus and something intrinsically unjust about the Japanese dominating an equal number of Chinese. Neither the Communists nor the Soviet leaders suffered from any of these delusions.

The policy of the Soviet Union arises out of three factors in the present situation:

(1) The history of Finland and its present rulers and the character of its present Government. Remember that in 1920 Lenin prophetically wrote: "The Finnish bourgeoisie, which has strangled thousands of Finnish workers during the White Terror, knows that it will never be forgiven for having done so when it is no longer backed by the German bayonets which enabled it to do so . . ." That day has come, and Finland's rulers and those who support them are having some war-of-intervention debts paid to them.

(2) The incontestable fact that the second imperialist war is in progress between three Great Powers. Three armies, three navies, and three air fleets are mobilised but have not chosen their battle-ground nor, it would seem from all the diplomatic moves, their ultimate enemy.

(3) The Communists in the European countries moving from the defensive to the offensive on the rising revolutionary temper created by the war, the dividing up of the big estates in Soviet Poland, and the events in Finland showing that the Red Army will come out of its own borders. As Lenin dispassionately put it: "The decisive battle may be deemed fully matured when all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently confused, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle beyond their capacity." That day is not yet here, but it is surely and swiftly moving to "the last fight" in a number of countries.

Glasgow. ARCHIBALD HUNTER, Jr.

SIR,—In your issue of December 9th, and in a recent speech of Mr. Herbert Morrison's, it is suggested that the invasion of Finland convicts Stalin of infidelity to the precepts of Lenin. But why? Finland was not the only component of the Tsarist Empire to win independence at the Russian Revolution. There was also Georgia. From 1918 to 1921 Georgia was an independent republic. Like Finland, Georgia was politically a democracy. Like Finland, she enjoyed the sympathy of democratic idealists—notably of the late J. Ramsay MacDonald. Like Finland, economic considerations ensured for Georgia the interested concern of the capitalist world: as Finland has nickel and timber, so Georgia controlled the pipe-line from the Baku oilfields to Batum. Like Finland's, her independence was recognised by the Soviet Government. But in 1921 there was a Communist rising against the Georgian Government, Soviet troops crossed the frontier, and a Georgian Soviet Republic was proclaimed.

This *coup* of Lenin's was condemned by democratic idealists just as Stalin's in Finland is to-day. Yet now we can clearly see that the real issue was not whether Georgia should be independent or not, but whether the South Caucasian oilfields should be controlled by the Soviet or by Western capitalists. Judgment in such cases depends, for all who make a scientific study of politics, not on legalistic definitions of aggression, but on whether they want capitalism or Socialism to rule the world. And I want Socialism. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

Bournemouth.

[This defence of Stalin has at least the merits of simplicity and logic. If Communists said without more ado that all means, even the bombing and shooting of small peoples is justifiable in the interests of the U.S.S.R. we should know where we were. We should be spared the nauseating spectacle of those who have vociferously urged resistance to aggression now putting forward with complete cynicism the very arguments on Stalin's behalf that they rightly regarded as hypocritical nonsense in the mouth of Hitler. On the first point of this letter, Mr. Robertson misunderstood us. In fact many believe that Lenin strongly disapproved of the subjugation of Georgia. But in saying that Stalin had departed from the principles of Lenin we were primarily refering to the execution of members of the Communist Party who criticised the Party line. This departure from the principles of Lenin has been disastrous to the U.S.S.R. and to the cause of Socialism everywhere. It has convinced most people, including many loyal Communists, that Stalin has forgotten the Socialist ends which originally inspired the Bolshevik Revolution and become, like other dictators, solely concerned with his own power.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

CREWE HOUSE PROPAGANDA

SIR,—May I correct a serious mistake in Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard's article on "German and English Propaganda"? He says: "The American public has not forgotten the false and misleading propaganda which was deliberately sent to the United States from Crewe House and other sources during the last war, for that has been set forth at length in a number of books."

I cannot speak for "other sources," because I do not know what they were. I can speak for Crewe House which, from January, 1918, until the end of the war, was the headquarters of the Department for Propaganda in Enemy Countries.

To suggest that Crewe House sent propaganda to the United States is to suggest that the United States was an enemy country, whereas it had been associated with the Allies in the war from April 6th, 1917, onwards, that is to say, a good nine months before Crewe House came into being.

Lord Northcliffe was the Director of Crewe House propaganda.

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One of his main ideas was that Crewe House should inform enemy countries of the immensity and the importance of the American war effort. American representatives attended the Inter-Allied propaganda conferences held at Crewe House in 1918, and were closely associated with its work throughout. To say that Crewe House sent "false and misleading propaganda" to the United States is nonsense.

Incidentally, Crewe House propaganda was based on two principles: (*a*) to tell the truth; (*b*) to proclaim a settled policy which events would bear out. WICKHAM STEED

London.

WAR AIMS

SIR,—Mr. M. W. Murray asks me two questions: "What are the maximum offers that you will make to Germany for peace?" and, "If they are refused, what then?"

My answers are: (1) Whatever is necessary, after a frank and careful examination of all relevant facts, to operate a policy of maximum economic co-operation in Europe, which must obviously include the sacrifice of the supremacy of private over public interest in British policy. On that one objective I would agree to an armistice and a conference, in the recognition that the issues of ideology and liberty have sprung from economic breakdown. (2) Having in the conference made my fullest contribution to the only basis on which Europe can function in peace, I would throw myself on the European public to whom I had made my offer, in the belief that no fate could be worse than the smash-up or/and the totalitarianism we are now heading for. The one hope of saving democracy or of securing its return where it has been lost, is in the application of the economics of abundance.

12 Victoria Avenue, WILFRED WELLOCK
Quinton, Birmingham.

STRETFORD BY-ELECTION

SIR,—The full significance of the Stretford by-election result may well be lost to those who do not know the circumstances of the conflict. When I entered the constituency last week, every hoarding carried large posters put up by the Conservatives and Communists. I saw only one diminutive poster displayed by the I.L.P. The daily press was solidly for the Government candidate, except for the *Daily Worker*, which was extensively on sale and gave much space to the Communist case at Stretford. The I.L.P. had no daily paper sponsoring its case. Without funds, and consequently short of all the usual means of advertising themselves, without cars or a large personnel, the I.L.P. nevertheless polled about three times as many votes as the Communists and nearly one-seventh of the total poll.

The meaning of this should be clear. This was an anti-war vote and at the same time a rejection of the two-faced Russian Janus. With adequate funds that vote could have been more than doubled—the wonder is that more than 4,000 people even knew there was an anti-war candidate standing—other than the Communist. REGINALD REYNOLDS

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London, W.2.

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"BARBARIANS AT THE GATE"

SIR,—I wonder whether any of your readers felt the same sense of disquiet as I did when reading Mr. Richard Coventry's review of Leonard Woolf's *Barbarians at the Gate*. So obliquely destructive an article is hard to analyse, but what I fancied I discerned was a strong strain of approval for the Totalitarian State, which comes very strangely from THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. What other construction can be put, for instance, on the words: "The reason why every state must be more or less authoritarian is because man is a non-political animal"? Mr. Coventry goes on to say: "I dislike Mr. Woolf's simple assumption, in common with Mr. Churchill, that the Nazis are Huns. *It may be good enough as a war-time slogan for the masses*, but it comes strangely from a thinker of Mr. Woolf's dimensions." The words I have italicised seem to me to show a shockingly undemocratic contempt for public opinion (worthy only of our Ministry of Information at its worst), but what disturbs one most about the sentence is the first part. There are two interpretations to be put on this. Either Mr. Coventry is maintaining that Mr. Woolf has called the *Germans* "Huns" (for that was the implication of Mr. Churchill's famous slip), which is patently untrue to anyone who has read the book; or Mr. Coventry himself believes that the Nazi leadership is maligned by the name of "Huns." Now, I may have got this war all wrong, but I imagined that if there was one thing about which all "men of good will" were agreed, it was that the Nazi leaders, as opposed to the German people, *did* deserve the name of Huns, or any other name one may give to those who specialise in cruelty and the destruction of culture.

Finally, I am puzzled to know what these mysterious "social forces, still incohate and confused" are, which Mr. Coventry detects already stirring "beneath the superstructure of this Totalitarian State." If he simply means that there is a strong current of socialism in the thinking of the Nazi rank-and-file, he is telling us nothing new and nothing that Mr. Woolf, I imagine, would dream of denying. And it makes no difference whatsoever to Mr. Woolf's argument, that Herr Hitler has perverted this strain of socialism to his own ends—to the construction of a vast slave state. The latent desire for liberty and equality, both economic and political, may indeed finally crack the superstructure of the Totalitarian State, but this will be precisely because men, German men too, prefer the ideals Mr. Woolf champions to slavery. To suggest that any other tendency in Nazi fascism may contain the hopeful "seeds of a new age," seems to me, if I may use Mr. Coventry's own words, "dangerous nonsense."

Fieldhead, JOHN LEHMANN
Bourne End, Bucks.

CASCA

SIR,—With reference to your extremely interesting comment on "Julius Caesar," may I suggest that there *are* two Cascas in Julius Caesar.

(1) Casca, the poseur, telling the story of Caesar and the crown.
(2) The real Casca—scared out of his wits by the storm, etc.

No. 1, lethargic. No. 2, "quick-mettle." See Cassius, Act I, Sc. 2.: "However he *puts on* this tardy form."

Mr. Hawtrey's presentation appears to be in accordance with the text. W. R. DUNSTAN

Stantons, Lewes, Sussex.

Current Literature

THE PROPHET OF DESTRUCTION

Hitler Speaks. By HERMANN RAUSCHNING. *Thornton Butterworth.* 10s. 6d.

When Freedom Shrieked. By ROTHAY REYNOLDS. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

There are two ways of taking Dr. Rauschning's book. You can read it as popular fiction and note the resemblances between Dr. Rauschning's professedly verbatim accounts of conversations with Hitler and John Buchan's first thriller, *The Power House.* The parallels are astonishingly close: and on internal evidence—though the idea is preposterous—it would be easy to believe that Hitler had modelled himself on Buchan's villain; or, alternatively, that Dr. Rauschning had copied his Hitler from him. There is not only the same fantastic plot, but much of the jargon which John Buchan puts in the mouth of his arch-conspirator flows from the lips of Dr. Rauschning's Hitler. Both books are written in the style of popular melodrama, as the *Sunday Express* realised no doubt, when it serialised *Hitler Speaks.*

There can be little doubt that the book as it stands is at the best historical fiction. Dr. Rauschning was *not,* as his publishers assert, "an intimate friend and confidant of Hitler from the initiation of the Nazi movement." On the contrary, he did not join the party until the '30s and left it again in 1934. On the other hand, Otto Strasser was one of Hitler's early collaborators, though he quarrelled in 1930. It looks as though Strasser, who is a real Nazi with a Nazi imagination and dynamic, had collaborated with Dr. Rauschning, who is a Prussian nationalist with a strong sympathy for Nazism, to produce this macabre piece of popular journalism. If so, they deserve the success they will undoubtedly have.

But *Hitler Speaks* can be read in another way. Both Dr. Rauschning and Otto Strasser know Hitler well, and they have staged their melodrama to prove their innocence and his guilt. In the first and last acts, the scenery is lath and plaster and Hitler is played by a somewhat obvious actor. But in the middle of the play there is an uncanny change. It is as though among the make-belief of the stage, the man himself had begun to speak, infinitely bigger and more dangerous than the dramatists had dared to imagine him. Hitler ceases to be the type, which they portrayed, the Buchanesque conspirator against civilisation, and comes to life; not the stiff figure which his cast-off adjutants wish to denounce, but the terrifying personality who dispensed with Otto Strasser and Dr. Rauschning because they were small men who dared not face the dangers of his monstrous vision. In these sections of the book, Dr. Rauschning seems like a renegade Boswell, awed and yet aghast at the majesty of his master. Here is Hitler's verdict on Dr. Rauschning:

> Don't associate with those bourgeois nationalists. Don't take them more seriously than they deserve. The day of these gentry is past. The bourgeois age is ended. These men are ghosts. Don't let yourself be impressed by their so-called expert knowledge. They don't understand the new world that is arising and they know nothing of its laws. . . . See the self-importance of these people for what it is; the unreality of the theatre.

Hitler has grasped, better than his experts and generals, better than Dr. Rauschning, the character of our epoch. Alone of the Nazis he believes in and incarnates the Permanent Revolution:

> The revolution cannot be ended. It can never be ended. . . . We shall never allow ourselves to be held down to one permanent condition.

The difference between Russia and Germany is that the Trotsky of the German revolution won through, and refused to permit his movement to consolidate in the firm structure of the nation-state:

> The conception of the nation has become meaningless. The conditions of the time compelled me to begin on the basis of that conception. But I realised from the first that it could only have transient validity. The nation is a political expedient of democracy and Liberalism.

But there is a second and profounder difference between the Communist and the Nazi. Marxism was the creed of an oppressed class: it denounced the State as an instrument of power, yearned for an anarchist millennium and advocated the dictatorship of the proletariat because it *feared* the strength and skill of its bourgeois opponents. Russian ruthlessness, in theory and in practice, arises from a gnawing fear of a master-adversary. Hitler's attitude to his opponents is utterly different. He does not fear but despises them and reckons on their own inner corruption to bring him victory. He uses force not out of terror of a superior foe but out of a sheer ecstasy in its delights and the certainty that his corrupt adversaries are worthy only of torture and subjection.

Communism and Nazism are each products of an age. When Marx wrote, capitalism, nationalism and the bourgeoisie were indeed forces to be feared. But in Hitler's epoch their power and terror are gone. In an era of disintegration, he could despise what Lenin feared. Instead of assaulting Jericho, he sounded a trumpet, and its walls fell down.

There are epochs of transition, when such miracles are possible, if we believe that they are possible. Hitler believed in the impotence of opponents reckoned invincible, and made them doubt their own invincibility. By exposing that the old orders in Germany had lost their will to power, he destroyed that power. And so he succeeded where revolutionary Communism failed. His revolution of destruction has never relied on armed force where it could work upon the rottenness within.

There is only one end to such prophets of permanent revolution. That end is not the static slave-state ruled by a new aristocracy, of which Hitler dreams; for the *Herren Staat* is as Utopian as the class-less society. The permanent revolution ends when it has by its ghastly purge created an opponent, whose will to power is also a will for justice and humanity. Mankind will not suffer the Leviathan for ever: but overthrows it when the forces of freedom and decency have learnt their lesson, and discarded their hypocrisies and make-belief. The demonic destructiveness of Hitlerism is the retribution which western civilisation must suffer for its sins of omission in the past. At present we are mesmerised by Hitler into the defence of the *status quo.* We can only break his spell when we cease to defend the past against him, and know what we want to create as clearly as Hitler knows what he can destroy. To do that we need a vision of freedom and social security as bold and confident as his vision of Aryan power triumphant over subject humanity.

Hitler has stated that he is not ashamed to learn from his enemies, in particular from the Bolshevists and the Catholic Church. Democrats should be equally willing to learn from him, not the ends or means they must adopt, but the character of the world in which we live. Here are a few of his sayings on which we should do well to meditate; though half-truths, they are the half we tend to forget.

> A mass that is apathetic and dull is the greatest threat to unity. Apathy is to the masses a defensive form of rejection. They hide behind apathy, till suddenly they break out in entirely unexpected actions and reactions. The statesman who fails to take immediate measures against a growing apathy of the masses ought to be impeached.

> We are now at the end of the Age of Reason. The intellect has grown autocratic, and has become a disease of life.

> Science is a social phenomenon, and like every other social phenomenon is limited by the benefit or injury it confers on the community.
>
> The slogan of objective science has been coined by the professorate simply in order to escape from the very necessary supervision by the power of the State.

> Nothing is more mistaken than for a politician to pose as a non-moral superman. That is a fool's game. Those who try to play it are usually sons of respectable families who have been carefully brought up and gone to the bad, and who want to pass their degeneracy off as strength. I shall certainly not make it a matter of principle to act immorally in the conventional sense. I am ready to stick at nothing—that is all.

It is a relief to turn from Dr. Rauschning's revelations to the memoirs of Rothay Reynolds, who for many years provided Lord Rothermere with a Berlin correspondence of which he made very poor use. One scene in particular stands out as the illustration of why Hitler won. In the Spring of 1933, looking out of his window, Mr. Reynolds saw a long procession of Civil Servants shepherded by Storm Troops. At intervals the procession halted. "*Judah,*" shouted the Nazis, "*verrecke,*" bleated the timid sheep, and then the procession went on. When men with all the advantages of education and culture were willing to defile themselves in this way, no wonder the prophet of destruction could move mountains by his faith in things evil. Socialists who put their faith in a revival of German parliamentarism should read and ponder Mr. Reynolds's excellent book. RICHARD CROSSMAN

NEW NOVELS

Fallen Asleep While Young. By F. E. SILLANPÄÄ. *Putnam.* 7s. 6d.

My American. By STELLA GIBBONS. *Longmans.* 8s. 6d.

Captain Hornblower. By C. S. FORESTER. *Michael Joseph.* 8s. 6d.

It Takes All Kinds. By LOUIS BROMFIELD. *Cassell.* 10s. 6d.

The Circle in the Water. By MARJORIE BOWEN. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.

Nobody Ordered Wolves. By JEFFREY DELL. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

One year at the Olympia Circus there was a curious attraction, at a great height a lady hung by her teeth at the end of a rope and twirled there until she had made some two hundred and fifty revolutions when she climbed down to be seen no more. The act was puzzling, it was odd that so simple a thing could interest a large audience, odder that anyone could bear to do it not merely two hundred and fifty times but night after night and year after year. These novels fill one with the same baffled respect: *Fallen Asleep While Young* is a whale of a book, *My American* and *Captain Hornblower* approach three-decker length; *It Takes All Kinds* holds three full-length novels and six long stories, 2,400 pages of fiction altogether conveying as much information about one's fellow creatures as could be written on a half sheet of notepaper. *Fallen Asleep While Young* tells one that the death of an individual is not of great import because man's power to reproduce his kind guarantees a sort of immortality to humanity, a sentiment which hardly justifies 314 pages. Miss Stella Gibbons's reflection that there are few more pleasant things in the world than having a child with a person one loves rides lightly on 444 pages and the 866 pages of *Captain Hornblower* tentatively propose that you never know your luck. In *It Takes All Kinds*, Mr. Bromfield maintains the height suggested by his title for all his 781 pages, but for all that his book is entertaining. There seems no earthly explanation for its having been written beyond that he has from time to time read or heard a story of something that has happened to real people and has thought "Boy, what a story that would make." Consequently his simple readable novelettes have a crossword-like charm; it is fun spotting the old front-page stories and the old scandals embedded in them. Mr. Bromfield writes with the fluency of a brilliant talker and one surrenders to the easy flow, but it is disturbing all the same to see the writer of *The Strange Case of Annie Spragg* twirling so long and to such little purpose; that book went so deeply into the minds of the Pioneers and into the atmosphere of the settlement of the American west and these polished surfaces do not even give a true reflection of an expatriate's Europe. The preoccupations of Mr. C. S. Forester are as puzzling, he is extraordinarily perceptive of people's feelings and his descriptions of emotion, action, and places are astonishing. And yet his manifestly abundant gifts are tied to a story which under the title of *Compass and Carronade* might have come off G. A. Henty's assembly-belt. Captain Hornblower is a character brilliantly roughed out, but whenever a situation develops in which his tortured neurotic mind is in danger of being over-exposed Forester-Henty plunges into the story and conceals him behind five or six thousand words of naval action from which the reader emerges stunned and deafened. Henty wins in the end, Hornblower wins through to glory, financial stability, and an aristocratic wife after a series of sea battles, captures, and escapes, in which the doubtful, fearful Captain whom Mr. Forester introduced vanishes—in eight hundred pages the author has succeeded in drawing a veil over his principal character. This masterpiece of evasion would make a good Christmas present for the bookish young. A similar evasiveness mars *My American*, although it takes a different form; Miss Gibbons is not afraid of showing the minds of her characters, but she shields them from the brutality of events as jealously as Mr. Forester shields his from the reader. The book is mostly concerned with people trapped in petty and depressing lives from which there can be no escape, but Miss Gibbons manages last-minute rescues with machinery as plausible as Cinderella's pumpkin coach. There is a brilliant sketch of a boozy commercial traveller losing a fight against his old age, and a description of a baker's family, which together prove that Miss Gibbons is a realist outstanding among her contemporaries; a dozen skilfully drawn minor characters reinforce this impression. And yet this gifted writer, whose endowment is far richer than either Mr. Forester's or Mr. Bromfield's, gives us a sufficiently pallid story. It is of two children who meet briefly at Ken Wood and subsequently keep in touch in a semi-magical way, the English girl has visions of the young man; the American boy sees her in a recurrent dream, at last when they are grown up they meet in America and marry. One is astonished that such a frame can hold such good detail, one is bewildered that such a plot can be extended to support a full-length novel. Mr. Sillanpää is a Finnish writer and the son of a peasant so that a melancholy interest attaches to his novel. The book is about the cottagers and farmers of that unhappy country and the central figure is the daughter of a bankrupt farmer who has to go into service, in which occupation she is seduced, becomes afflicted with tuberculosis and dies sometime after 1918. It is a fairly ordinary steaming-dung-heap-peasant novel until the last few chapters which are a vivid picture of the days of civil war and the bitter exhausted months that followed it. Excellent, however, as these chapters are they lose a great deal by being lost in the endless list of poor Silja Salmelus's accidents, one feels that they appear as a profoundly boring episode in a depressing life and that the author has no deeper feeling about them than this. If only Mr. Sillanpää had more to say how well he would write—sympathy with the people one is writing about is not enough.

These blank cartridges make a hollow popping sound in contrast with Miss Marjorie Bowen's full-blooded roar. The third of a trilogy "dealing with various phases in the spiritual history of Great Britain," this volume deals with bitter war between Graham of Claverhouse and the Covenanters, with the dying of the old pagan religion of the witches, and the appearance of the stout bourgeois, "industrious and comfortable, a man of substance, with a kind and pretty wife who bore me noble children," and the search for God forgotten. It is all done with immense gusto and a Gothick delight in huge castle halls lit by the light of flaring torches, witches' sabbaths in ruined churches, and sinister conversations over guttering candles. There is no suggestion here that one must write novels if one is a novelist just to keep one's name in the public eye and that a novel is seventy thousand words about the same people. It is very good fun, in spite of the convention in which it is written. '"Nor are the rebels so bold," I added mockingly, "that they would dare to undertake a gentleman of the provision and substance of Sir Donald Garrie."' Spirit and ideas make one forgive a great deal.

Nobody Ordered Wolves is an amusing act of vengeance by a playwright who has been "associated with several of the leading motion-picture companies." The splendours of the British Film Industry are well conveyed to the reader, and the passages on the financial side will help the outsider to understand a great deal. The humour is of a mild English kind, which contrasts pleasantly with the fantastic nonsense which the sober reporting must seem to most people. The Wolf Pack in the studio at £500 a week which nobody ordered sounds like a fantastic overstatement, but one recalls chandeliers hired for a thousand pounds to appear on the screen for thirty seconds, and one realises that this is a pale version of the truth. The waste and idiocy make a good bitter joke. It is a work of agreeable malice.

ANTHONY WEST

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Not much has leaked out as to the precise methods by which the Falange obtained a foothold in the Church and in the Army. Only the results are apparent. On the other hand, most of the

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details of the Communists' rise to power are now known. From the first they realised that the road to power in Spain has always lain through the Army. By a careful distribution of foreign arms, by the limelight which their propaganda threw upon the often mediocre people who were working for them, by their control, through Alvarez del Vayo, of the political commissars, they had gradually built up for themselves the dominating position in the new Army which they had conspicuously failed to obtain in the Trade Unions. One must add, by their energy. Above the Popular Front parties, with their narrow provincialism, their Iberian intransigeance and their petty jealousies they appeared at first sight like a breath of healthy and purposeful activity, blowing from Europe. The Communist Party owed its popularity in the first year of the war to the belief that it would bring victory; it owed its unpopularity in the second to its intolerable conceit and *suffisance* and to its ruthless pursuit of power. Three centuries and a half ago the Jesuits had made a similar impression.

But defeat followed defeat for the Republican cause. After the collapse in Aragon Russian arms ceased to arrive. Then came the capture of Barcelona and the occupation of Catalonia by Franco's armies. It was quite obvious that, if Barcelona could not defend itself, the starving Central Zone, without munitions and without any means of obtaining them, would be unable to do so either. Yet the Communists preached continued resistance. Dr. Negrin, the Prime Minister, did so also.

Negrin was the plain businesslike man who had come into office almost two years before to organise victory. Although he owed his position mainly to the influence of the Communists, and was therefore associated with them in the minds of their enemies, he had never like his colleague, del Vayo, come under their spell. He had merely considered a *modus vivendi* with them to be necessary. When, after the collapse in Aragon, ultimate defeat became inevitable, he put forward terms of peace—the famous Thirteen Points. His policy then was to hold on until either the Democracies intervened or the war-weary population on Franco's side rebelled. But this failed through the passive attitude of the Democracies, and it was the Republicans who broke first.

Spaniards are slow to admit defeat, and it was not till after the fall of Barcelona that Negrin reduced his thirteen points to three. But his supporters were ebbing. Compelled to cross the frontier into France, faced with the resignation of the President of the Republic and the growing coolness of the French Government, he again reduced his terms to one—that there should be a general amnesty. This meant that the war must continue, since Franco would never accept such terms. But Negrin still hoped for intervention. The British Government was extremely anxious that the Spanish war should end before the next European crisis. He believed that by threatening to continue the war all summer he could secure their assistance in arranging an armistice. Lord Halifax thought the terms reasonable and conversations began. This was the situation when Negrin left for Valencia.

He had not counted, however, on the state of mind in the Central Zone. Among the civil population the famine had reached terrible proportions. Constant air raids had worn down their nerves. Besides, a strong regional feeling had grown up during the past year—the old antipathy of Castile for Catalonia. Madrid had defended itself: Barcelona, for all its big talk, had fallen without a blow: and now the Catalans, who had never pulled their weight in the war, were calling on Madrid to imitate Numantia. The Communists, who maintained the war could go on all summer, became intensely unpopular. All the jealousies which they had aroused during the past two years came to a head. It began to be said that peace could never be made so long as they and Negrin were in the Government.

Negrin showed no signs of having taken in this explosive situation. In a conference at Albacete on February 26th the various Army commanders, the chief of the Air Force and the Admiral commanding the Fleet all declared that they had no means of resisting the enemy offensive which was impending. Negrin brushed these warnings aside. He said nothing of the negotiations with Halifax. He merely replied that he had no option but to continue the war. Had he made a few enquiries he would have learned that the British Government must be perfectly aware of the conditions in the Central Zone and that his bluff (if it was bluff) was therefore not likely to be successful. But no—assuming that authoritarian attitude which is so typical of Spanish officials in delicate situations, he began to make arrangements for the replacement of certain of the Army commanders by Communists. The answer was not long in coming. Colonel Casado, with the support of the two Trade Unions and of the great majority of the civil population, made his *coup d'état*. A few of the Communist divisions came out into the streets, but war-weariness was stronger than party discipline, and after a few days' fighting the Defence Junta won.

Colonel Casado has written one of the most interesting—and also one of the most painful—books that have appeared upon the Spanish Civil War. It is not, of course, an impartial book, for it was written in answer to accusations of treachery and it contains certain inaccuracies and omissions, but it is obviously a book written in perfect good faith. The last chapters are the saddest. The shameful desertion of the Fleet, due to an unexplained panic, had robbed him of his best hope of evacuating those who were most compromised. None of the cargo ships owned by the Republic, which might have been sent to take off refugees, ever appeared. There was nothing left to be done but to trust to the promise given by General Franco that all who wished to do so would be allowed to leave the country on British warships. He had named two ports where they might assemble and Colonel Casado, who seems all along to have thought that the Nationalists would prefer the pacification and rebuilding of Spain in an atmosphere free from hatred to the satisfaction of their vengeance, believed him.

Then followed the wretched scene at the port of Gandía, where the British Consul (who seems to have placed every obstacle possible in the way of anyone being taken off) warned the members of the Defence Junta and other refugees who were waiting to embark on H.M.S. *Arethusa* that they must understand that they would be handed back to General Franco if he demanded it. The curtain goes down in Alicante, where the élite of the Republican leaders—six thousand in number—stood herded together in the neutral zone awaiting embarkation on the British and French warships lying outside the harbour, which were refused permission by their Governments to enter. Out of politeness, no doubt, to the country he is living in, Colonel Casado passes over part of this discreditable episode in silence. I shall therefore quote from the Report of the International Delegation for Spanish Evacuation and Relief who were eye-witnesses of what happened:

FINLAND'S
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by Lieutenant-Colonel
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NO other book gives such a clear picture of Finland's brave fight for independence, under the leadership of Field Marshal Baron Mannerheim, against the Russians.

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The total number that needed to be evacuated if the British and French Governments had put the resources within reach at the Delegation's disposal would have been in the order of 60,000. The total number that the Delegation could have dealt with but for the instructions issued by those Governments would have been about 6,500. The total number that were evacuated within the two days was no more than 650.

When one remembers the concern that the British Government had on many occasions expressed at the threats of reprisals made by the Nationalists, and the moral support that it had given both to the Negrin Government and to the Defence Junta, one is moved to enquire what exactly it has gained by this cowardly and heartless indifference. To-day there are only two neutral countries where the press is uniformly hostile to the Democracies: those countries are Spain and Russia. GEORGE BEATON

MODERATE MODERATION

Searchlights and Nightingales. By ROBERT LYND. *Dent.* 6*s.*

The light essay is a dying literary form, I suppose, because, while any writer can turn a good one out occasionally, very few can keep it up. Mr. Lynd's virtue is that he cannot stop; an encouraging sight for those of us who hope against hope some day to achieve an unceasing flow and to enter the regions of effortless limpidity of which Mr. Lynd is the master.

Tolerant but acid, friendly but free of whimsy, intimate but misleading, the present collection of twenty-nine articles is typical Y. Y., ready with the moral, even readier to explore it. He defends the nightingale and lies about the cuckoo, he counts the bumps as modern heads meet old beams in Tudor cottages, he upsets the case against cranks by defending their opponents, he explores the arguments in favour of smoking more and more and arriving later and later, he admits with dismay that the latest catastrophe from Spain and China horrified his mind but did not disturb his digestion and, in general, presents the spectacle of a man fascinated by his own dialectical materialism—his only too human gift of turning into his opposite. An expert essayist can write an essay on nothing; it's simply a business of moralising like the melancholy Jacques, who was an obvious columnist in exile. But it is when an essayist has *something* to write about that his quality tells; for example, in Y. Y., the admirable *Fallacy of the Short War*, or *After Dinner*. The first is a perfect concise cautionary survey of the fatal career of Hannibal in the Second Punic War, a prize-winner, cribbed from a reference book, in the contemporary game of finding historical analogies; the second is an account of an evening in the drawing room of an hotel. This is like a ghost story within a ghost story, the picture of the dying looking for the dead. It's either that or a piece of Tchekov in Bournemouth—where Tchekov would undoubtedly go to live if he could come to earth again. Among the gossip and the crossword puzzles an old man wanders stupified from guest to guest:

> "Excuse me," he says, "but can you tell me whether the old gentleman who used to sit in that chair"—pointing to it—"has gone?" "An old gentleman?" she asked. "No," he said, "not old. About 70, I should think. But he used to sit in that chair and whistle—whistle under his breath."

Y. Y. is a moderate man. He would recommend, I imagine, that we keep the ten commandments in moderation, not stealing too much or murdering too often; but human nature being unperfectable, he would not be dismayed if we ignored the commandments altogether and merely succeeded in not being too good, too charitable nor too truthful. But there is a difference between English and Irish moderation. English moderation is a vice, inertia pin-pricked by self-interest, the *Times* leader taking back its first paragraph. The real English virtue abides in its cranks, fanatics and romantics. Irish moderation, on the other hand, has the scarcity value of virtue. Mr. Lynd's defence of armchair politics, for example, is nostalgic rather than complacent; its background is the politics of a race whose struggles take place in the streets. If Mr. Lynd seems to be on the fence, this is an optical delusion caused by the fact that his world is a moral gymnasium which keeps him busy jumping back and forth from one side to the other. Moreover, he believes, with real Puritanism, in moderating his moderation; he defends unpunctuality because it makes you energetic, indolence because it makes you work all the time; and in all our bad habits he is quick to point out how the suffering they cause us is sufficient to justify them. V. S. PRITCHETT

A BOY DECIDES

Achilles. By W. H. D. ROUSE. *John Murray.* 6*s.*

The World is Round. By GERTRUDE STEIN. *Batsford.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Ships, Boats and Craft. By STUART E. BECK. *Herbert Jenkins.* 5*s.*

Achilles is a book about Achilles himself, the war at Troy, ancient Greece and lots of gods and goddesses come in as they always do in books about ancient happenings. There is a lot of exciting talk but not of doings; I think this is mainly because it isn't true and when something like a god riding across the sea on a chariot happens, it is not so exciting as if it was about a German mine-laying plane rushing across the sea. In the end Achilles gets shot in the heel, the only place where he could be killed, and Aeneas escaped and founded Rome. The gods don't seem to have so much to say at the end and there are less speeches and more happenings.

The World is Round is like a tree with two branches which are the children, Rose and Willy. The trunk is when they are together and all the leaves are the details. There are no twigs. It is rather a difficult book to explain but this is the sort of way it goes.

> Why not Willy
> If not Willy
> Well Willy. . . .
>
> But once when he went away it was to stay there where he had seen it.
> He saw it.
> It was a little house and two trees near it.
> One tree sometimes makes another tree.
> Willy
> Will he.

But it's not always quite so batty as you might think it was as I have explained in the tree part. Rose is not smart. (I'm rhyming like the authoress). She tries to take a blue chair up a mountain. It would be best for a learning rather than a reading book because of the rhymes. Here is some more.

> Anybody try to climb a mountain all alone with only a blue garden chair to hold there and everything on a mountain that is there and

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¶ Funny: **Hilaire Belloc's** first collected 'Cautionary Verses,' 6*s. net*—and **Soglow's** malicious comments on this nation, 'A Confidential History of Modern England.' 5*s. net*—**And may we send you our Christmas List?**

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BOOK

CHRISTMAS in war-time. What a paradox it seems. To keep the feast of the Prince of Peace to the accompaniment of droning war-planes and the thundering of guns. Yet, Christmas *will* be kept, and certainly nowhere more loyally, nowhere more joyously, than in these islands, and in the far-flung battle front and outposts of the British Empire.

The time draws nearer and nearer, and you are constantly wondering in your mind, what shall I give this Christmas? All indications point to books being the most popular gift media this year. The black-out obviously curtails many normal pleasures, and more and more people are finding in books their chief recreation. Thus the problem is so far fined down, but still you are faced with the old, old question. Which book or books shall I give? With a view to assisting the solution of your problem, the following list of outstanding books has been compiled, which includes something for every palate.

For those who wish to know more of the doings of the Silent Service we confidently recommend *We Dive at Dawn*, the epic of the British Submarine Service (12*s.* 6*d.*) and *The Grey Diplomatists* (7*s.* 6*d.*) both by Lieut.-Comdr. Kenneth Edwards. C. W. Domville-Fife has edited a long-wanted work, *Evolution of Sea Power* (18*s.*) The contributors are all distinguished naval experts and their practical experience is reflected throughout the book. Purely for seamen is *On the Bridge* (7*s.* 6*d.*) an indispensable guide for all navigators by Rear-Admiral J. A. G. Troup. Two excellent works of reminiscence are *The Story of a Naval Life* (18*s.*) by Admiral Sir Hugh Tweedie, and Comdr. C. L. Kerr's fascinating book *All in the Day's Work* (15*s.*). These volumes are all well illustrated and eminently suitable for gifts.

Biographies and memoirs are becoming increasingly popular. What could be more seasonable and yet more pleasing than Ernest Raymond's great masterpiece, *In the Steps of St. Francis* (8*s.* 6*d.*). It is a book perfectly attuned for Christmas giving, for has not St. Francis been very rightly styled—"The Herald of the Great King, Minstrel and Troubadour of God." *The Windsor Tapestry* (7*s.* 6*d.*) by Compton Mackenzie must always command serious attention. As Ivor Brown truly said in the *Observer*, "There is much more to the book than the raking of ashes. The volume is almost a history of two centuries." The *Scotsman* in praise of John Lindsey's *The Lovely Quaker* (15*s.*) (the mystery of Hannah Lightfoot and George III) says:—"The story is enthralling. The book reads itself and will not be laid down." *Surgeons All* (18*s.*) by Harvey Graham is perhaps the most outstanding work of this year. It is not a text-book, but essentially a popular history of surgeons from the dawn of man to the present day. Oliver St. John Gogarty declares:—"This is the best book on surgery I have ever read. I agree with every word of it." You cannot go wrong in giving this book to either doctor or layman. Both will enjoy it. The unique illustrations are the result of a worldwide search. We now come to Oliver St. John Gogarty's own uproariously witty book, *As I Was Going Down Sackville Street* (7*s.* 6*d.*) which cannot fail to please.

Countryside and Travel Books are always treasured. Lady Wedgwood's lovely volume *Fenland Rivers* (7*s.* 6*d.*); *Letters to Young Shooters* (10*s.* 6*d.*) by Uncle Ralph, and *Two in a Valley* (7*s.* 6*d.*) (the new Cotswold book) by Stephen Gwynn and Roy Beddington, are all well worth-while, not for graphic writing alone, but also for their charming illustrations.

Prominent among miscellaneous books is *And Pilate Said . .* (10*s.* 6*d.*), a new study of the Roman Procurator by Frank Morison (author of *Who Moved the Stone?*). A book of intense interest both to the Biblical student and the archæologist. For the student of economics is Clarence C. Hatry's *Light Out of Darkness* (8*s.* 6*d.*) Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., has created a literary gem in his charming little book *Letters from Their Aunts* (3*s.* 6*d.*). These letters written as between the relatives of some of the early Christians afford delightful reading and provide an instructive picture of life in early Christian times.

NEWS

TO THE MOON

O born before our birth began!
Through all your blanched and listening vales,
Far from the echoing shores of man,
Aloof, may sing—What nightingales.

This stanza is only one of the many jewels with which Oliver St. John Gogarty delights the lovers of poetry in *Others to Adorn* (7*s.* 6*d.*), of which Basil de Selincourt says:—"These poems are destined I believe to become part of our common inheritance."

A valuable aid to all public speakers is *Gathered Harvest* (3*s.* 6*d.*), by David Williamson, a collection of most useful stories and quotations, for freshening discourses with apt illustrations. *Slimming for the Million* (3*s.* 6*d.*) by Dr. Eustace Chesser is, as implied by the title, apparently most people's book. It propounds a most comforting doctrine, viz.: "There is no need to starve to slim," and the food charts are laid out on common-sense lines. The "Needs of To-day" Series is now so widely known that comment is redundant. The latest volume *Learning to Think* (3*s.* 6*d.*) by Canon Lindsay Dewar, will prove an admirable guide for all to clear thinking.

No list is complete without some good-class fiction. *Mr. Emmanuel* by Louis Golding is the story of an old Jewish gentleman, who has been admirably described as "A modern Don Quixote tilting against the Nazi windmills." "A great masterpiece," says one reviewer, "A story which will touch the heart of all the world." Maurice Griffiths presents a magnificent romance of the Mississippi steamboats in *No Southern Gentleman* (8*s.* 6*d.*). Outstanding among novels by the younger writers is Michael Harrison's *What Are We Waiting For?* (8*s.* 6*d.*). Professor Dobree says:—"He brings a new mind to the whole business of novel-writing, in style, form and treatment." *His Little Kingdom* (7*s.* 6*d.*) by Simon Dewes is the story of Thesiger, Headmaster of Stayne, whose life centres around his conception of what a school should be.

For lighter reading, *That Trouble Piece* (7*s.* 6*d.*) by Countess Barcynska is very acceptable. Wilhelmina Trouble is the youngest daughter of a family forever harassed by tradesmen. She has a nose for crime detection, and gate-crashes Fleet Street in a story which speeds along with the sparkle of a mountain torrent.

The lovers of mysteries will welcome the latest Francis Gerard book, *Emerald Embassy*, (7*s.* 6*d.*), which is the thirteenth story from this gifted author's pen, of whom James Whittaker says:—"Twenty-three established critics have hailed Francis Gerard as 'The new Edgar Wallace.' I want to hail him as 'the Old Edgar Wallace,' and I can say nothing higher than that." Russell Thorndike once more enchants with a splendid addition to the world-famed "Dr Syn" series, *The Courageous Exploits of Dr. Syn* (7*s.* 6*d.*). All old readers of Russell Thorndike, and many new ones, will welcome this latest story of the smuggler-parson of Dymchurch.

Two other young writers lay claim to success. Michael Lawler with *The Hooked Cross* (7*s.* 6*d.*), and Robert Chapman with *Deep Secret* (7*s.* 6*d.*). The main action of this story is laid in a system of ancient caves, which many readers will immediately identify with the Cheddar Gorge.

Lastly, but by no means least important, are books for the children. Surely Richard W. Hatch shows great ingenuity in choosing as a hero, a lobster, for his delightful story, *The Curious Lobster* (6*s.*). One small boy to whom the book was given, said "I like Mr. Lobster better than *Alice in Wonderland*, because Alice was always bewildered, but Mr. Lobster wasn't: he was wise." This for the eight to the ten years old. For the ten to twelves, there are two splendid classics by Hector Malot, *Nobody's Girl* and *Nobody's Boy* (each 6*s.*). Translated from the French, they are quickly winning renown as supreme stories of the child-world. All three books are very charmingly illustrated.

The above books are only a selection. A postcard addressed to Rich & Cowan, Ltd., 37 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1, will bring you by return a copy of "The Griffon." This is a handsomely produced and illustrated magazine, containing articles by eminent authors, in which all these books and many others are extensively noted and discussed. R. W.

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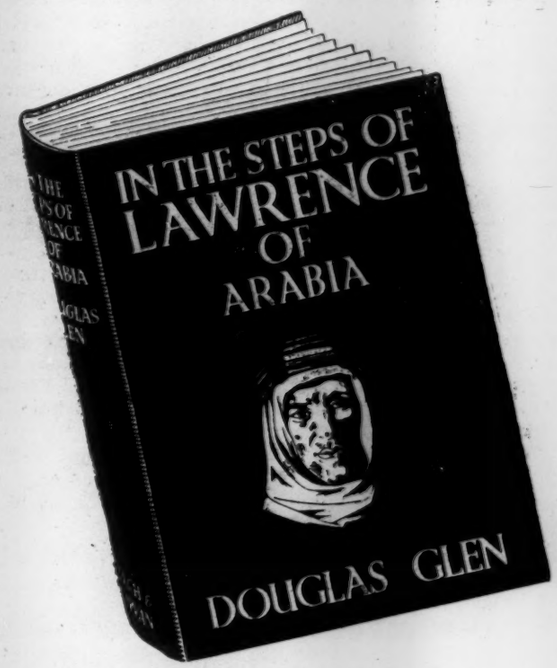

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then see what it is that ran. Water yes and birds yes and rats yes and snakes yes and lizards yes and cats yes and cows yes, and trees yes and scratches yes, and sticks yes, and flies yes, and bees yes but not a Rose with a chair, all a Rose with a chair can dare is just not stare but keep on going up there.

She did.

Ships, Boats and Craft gives the tonnage and a few details and sometimes the length of every sort of boat. It gives a good illustration of each boat. (In the battleships it gives the sort and number of guns.) 464 boats are described and illustrated. I think it would be a good book in helping Sea Scouts when they are having tests or are learning about boats for tonnages and things like that. I like it myself to look at all the different ships there are in the world. I thought before that tugs could only have one mast, but I see here that they sometimes have two. I suppose it is because I have only seen London tugs. I didn't think that Q ships would have to be camouflaged as I thought they would want submarines to get near them so that they could have a better fire.

If you want to present a Christmas present to a school you should present *Achilles*; if you want a present for someone very, very young and who can't read, you should give *The World is Round*, as it's not very good for reading to oneself. The boat book is grand for a boy aged eight to twenty.

GILBERT BAKER (aged eight)

A SAD STORY

Self Portrait. Letters and Journals of Charles Ricketts, R.A. Collected and compiled by T. STURGE MOORE. Edited by CECIL LEWIS. *Peter Davies.* 15s.

Dazzling in his gifts, tragic in his limitations, highly individual yet conspicuously a product of his age, Charles Ricketts offers to the biographer a most rewarding subject. I started, therefore, to read *Self Portrait* with high expectations, which were largely justified by the very delightful letters and diaries it contains. But what can have persuaded Mr. Cecil Lewis to be their editor? He writes of Ricketts with affectionate enthusiasm, but he seems blessedly unaware of the problems which it was his business to resolve or at least to state. He has not troubled to give us even the most necessary facts. We are not told the origin or circumstances of Rickett's parents. We are not told how or where he was educated. We are not told so much as the place or the date of either his birth or his death. About Charles Shannon, who shared his life, Mr. Lewis is equally secretive: "Ricketts met Shannon at the age of sixteen," we are informed; but whether Ricketts or Shannon was sixteen remains obscure. The letters have been selected on some unexplained principle, and while much material has been omitted, room has been found for letters from Mr. Lewis, which are doubtless favourable specimens of his prose style, but which throw no light on the subject of the book.

Ricketts was born at Geneva on October 2nd, 1866. His father was a sailor turned painter; his mother, to whom he was devoted, was a Frenchwoman; he was educated chiefly in France, and remained bilingual. Ricketts lived until his death in 1931 with Shannon, whose good looks were unaccompanied by any uncommon intelligence, the two men sharing their incomes and their collection of works of art. This intimacy seems to have encouraged in Ricketts a natural bent towards seclusion. Surrounded by a choice group of friends—some of them distinguished writers like Michael Field, Mr. Sturge Moore, Mr. Bottomley and Mr. Binyon—he sheltered himself in a sort of orchid-house from the frosts and rains of contemporary life. Everything in his house was exquisite, the food, the wine, the wineglasses, the flowers, the works of art which were gradually and astonishingly collected out of an exiguous income. If Ricketts had been a rich man, he would have been one of the greatest of collectors. His taste was supported by profound knowledge. Unluckily, he could not enjoy pictures or sculptures unless their impact had been softened by the passage of time: the pre-Raphaelites he understood and loved, the Impressionists he partly understood but did not like, and to their great successors he was stone-blind. But his dislikes among contemporary artists are more comprehensible than his likings. While he considered Renoir a vulgar sensualist, Cézanne mentally deficient and Matisse an impostor, he delighted in the insipidity of Puvis. Mr. Eric Kennington is, I think, the only artist of the younger generation praised in these letters. His aesthetic theories must have ossified in his adolescence: he thought it the business of a painter to represent natural beauty, and he could not forgive Holbein for painting anyone so ugly as Archbishop Warham. Moreover, he sedulously avoided the company of those with whose tastes he disagreed. Already at the age of thirty-four, describing a visit to Paris, he complains of a lack of energy and of curiosity:

> Our solitary existence in England, where silence and privacy are still prized, made us resist the noisy assertion of each person. There the assertion of a robust and declamatory egoism, in the individual as in art, meets one everywhere. We were both too tired to find the things we had come to see.

How, one wonders, would he have endured the ferocious hurly-burly of his favourite Renaissance? This shrinking into an imaginary, edulcorated past is the most certain sign of decadence, and Ricketts was a man of the Nineties, chilled by his own lack of humanity, who survived, shuddering, into a robuster age.

It was in his painting that this streak of feebleness showed itself most distressingly. Nobody had such knowledge of glazes, diluents and all the technical devices of the Old Masters, nobody had studied their work with more loving attention. Unluckily when he himself came to paint, he neglected Nature and called upon his memory of masterpieces. The result was a puppet-show of empty gestures, lacking even that intellectual interest in design which one recognises in other erudite painters such as Roger Fry. Ricketts was elected A.R.A. in 1923, R.A. in 1928; "Please don't believe in glory," he writes ironically, "Shannon's and Philpot's sales fell after their election, so have mine." The published letters do not reveal how this most fastidious of aesthetes supported the company of his jolly fellow-Academicians, most of whom cared and knew no more than pork-butchers about the Old Masters. Can their contempt for Cézanne have made him forgive their ignorance of Giorgione? Ricketts, born thirty years earlier, might have prospered as a minor pre-Raphaelite; thirty years later, with his taste for cruelty and over-emphasis, he might have been a rival to Monsieur Dali. His chief gift as a painter was for theatrical design: Bernard Shaw gave him some opportunities, but he never found a Diaghileff. And even in this department he was more scholarly than inventive.

It is arguable that Ricketts should have made painting his hobby and writing his profession. His letters contain many

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lively comments on books, and he was far less blinkered in his literary than in his visual taste. His critical studies of Old Masters, though too Paterish in style, are packed with comments that are enlightening and exciting even when one disagrees with them. He was fascinated by the art of remote ages and countries. "He stood champion," a friend of mine writes, "of Italy, Greece and Egypt, when such men as Tonks and MacColl were turning their eyes to Zorn and Sargent." His letters and journals are written much better, because less studiously, than his books. Occasionally he becomes successfully elaborate:

> St. Mark's is the most mysterious and intimidating structure in the world, a cluster of jewelled caves over an undulating floor, like a petrified sea; here the textures and surfaces have become unreal, incense-stained marbles glow like tortoise-shell and amber . . . The very dust there held in the hand is a compound of precious substances, flakes of gold from decaying mosaics. What seems dead bone or coral is probably the grain of dying marble. It looks like a temple of the Grail, partly designed by Klingsor, and a blood-eating dragon probably lives behind the famous solid gold altar with its gems and glittering enamels. A bunch of real flowers I saw there once looked like pale paper, like a bunch of theatre flowers.

But most of the time he is flashing with a spontaneous wit. "It must be unpleasant to be buried in a Venetian church, rather like being buried in a decaying ship at anchor." "He is at that stage when he mistakes the ability to detect the folly of others for a sign of power in oneself." Bernard Shaw "seems rather to understand music without really liking it—probably like God he rather dislikes everything." There are numbers of good stories, including some excellent new anecdotes of Wilde and a tale of the last war which has a topical and cautionary value: the University of Oxford, it seems, sent the Slade Professor his dismissal on a postcard, announcing that his services were to be suspended during the war; when somebody protested, Sir Walter Raleigh "flew into a passion and said that Art was without importance, an occupation of our leisure, that in these serious times the world could do without." (Sir Walter at the time occupied the Chair of English Literature). Ricketts believed passionately in the importance of Art, and of freedom for the artist. Throughout these fascinating letters and diaries this belief burns and glitters and flares. His love of music, the ballet and of the drama was intelligent, as well as enthusiastic, and adds interest to the book. Indeed, there is hardly a page which is not enjoyable.

Richly entertaining as these letters are, they leave an impression of pathos. Ricketts was a man of extraordinary gifts. He might have been the Bakst of England; he might have been a great writer on art; most likely of all, he might have been a very great collector. Ill-luck, comparative poverty, above all the age into which he was born, exaggerated a weakness of his character into a mortal incapacity. The time for him was out of joint, and lacking the fortitude to shape his misanthropy to the purposes of art he shrank into the shelter of the varnished past. These letters and diaries are likely to survive his pictures and his formal writings, but ill-luck has pursued him into the grave. We had been looking forward to The Life and Letters of Charles Ricketts, and we have been fobbed off with insufficient Letters and no Life

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COUNTRY NOTES

Country Notes. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST. *Michael Joseph.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

For the past year or two Miss Sackville-West's notes on country life have provided a fortnightly breath of fresh air for the readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. She has now collected these notes, together with three longer essays on French Savoy, Burgundy and Tuscany, and has made them into a very delightful book. She has not only a poet's romantic love for birds and flowers, and a gardener's practical knowledge and experience, but a deep, as it were mystical feeling for the slow, often uncouth or cruel processes of Nature. She sometimes allows herself to be sentimental, but she never falls into the townsman's or week-end cottager's illusions about the country life.

Whether she is writing about her garden, her trout, the February frost, winter flowers, hops or harvest she does so with exactness, reverence and genuine humility. It is totally wrong to ascribe to her, as her publishers do, a taste of astringency; the book is indeed notable for a lack of even the slightest acidity or bitterness. When she attacks fox-hunters, or pickers of bluebells or other desecrators of the countryside, she writes with pity rather than anger, sadness rather than indignation. Similarly, although she is a passionate gardener, she has humour enough to see how absurd a gardener like herself can sometimes be. She rarely lifts her feet off that sorrowful Wealden clay which she so courageously succeeds in loving, but her prose has a gracious fluency and colour quite worthy of the beautiful county whose scenes and seasons she recounts. The book is plentifully illustrated with reproductions of photographs. The originals as far as we can detect must be remarkably good, but they are so uncommonly ill printed as to disfigure rather than embellish the book.

Horizon. Edited by CYRIL CONNOLLY. Monthly, 1*s.*

With an almost parental mixture of hope and anxiety THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION wishes good luck to this new monthly, the editor of which has been, and still is, one of our most valued contributors. A *horizontale*, as so accomplished a cosmopolitan as Mr. Connolly knows, is French slang for what has here been known as a trollop, a slut or a quean. But there is nothing in the least disreputable about *Horizon*. The editorial preface declares that the times are archaistic, conservative and irresponsible, and suggests that a journal should reflect the times. In the first number Mr. de la Mare represents archaism, Mr. H. E. Bates conservatism, and Mr. Grigson irresponsibility. There are comments upon the war by Mr. Priestley and Mr. Herbert Read, a divagation upon nature and art by the editor, and a notice, which we could wish longer, by Mr. Spender of Messrs. Heard, Huxley and Wells. Poems are by Prokosch (at his rhetorical best), Betjeman, MacNeice and Auden. In the next numbers we are promised Hugh Walpole, Plomer and Elizabeth Bowen; and then a number devoted to contemporary art, under the direction of Sir Kenneth Clark. A monthly magazine such as Mr. Connolly can be trusted to produce is seriously needed, and we hope that the public will hasten to scan this new *Horizon*.

My Royal Past. By BARONESS VON BÜLOP, as told to CECIL BEATON. *Batsford.* 21*s.*

This Christmas book makes an ideally sumptuous present, but not for the unsophisticated. Mr. Beaton has written the autobiography of an imaginary German Princess born in the 'seventies. The style such ladies employ is most exactly caught, and there are even notes scribbled in the margin such as one finds sometimes in books from the London Library. But the illustrations are the *clou*. With indefatigable ingenuity, Mr. Beaton has produced a series of photographs of his heroine, her relations and friends. Many of them are highly skilful specimens of *montage*, and every detail is nicely considered, including frames of flower-

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ornaments. Then there are numbers of prettily detailed drawings by Mr. Beaton, who luxuriates dotingly among the elaborate hats and frocks of the eighteen-nineties and nineteen-hundreds. The whole book is a dazzling piece of unhearty fun which can be recommended vigorously to all connoisseurs of royalty. The Baroness, we may add, looks as if a lot of her blue blood was Spanish, though the book contains no reference to this.

Atlantic Crossing. By G. WILSON KNIGHT. *Dent.* 3s. 6d.

Mr. Wilson Knight is already known as a Shakespearean critic. In this book, though Shakespeare is not altogether absent, he gives us something of a different kind which, in a brief summary, it is very difficult to describe. On the whole, we should be inclined to call it a kind of prose congeries of the Catullian epyllion, the Horatian satire when Horace is least satirical in the modern sense, and Don Juan without the cynicism. For the time being, the ship is the world, and the week's voyage a miniature of life, in which autobiography, reminiscence, adventure, vitality and boredom, health and sickness, are crowded in haphazard fashion.

With such variety, the story is sometimes hard to follow, and the pronouns, which are numerous, occasionally act rather as disguises than as substitutes for names. The style also varies with the substance: now it annoys, and now it charms with a rare beauty, and this especially when what, in other hands, might be a mere ship-flirtation, takes on the character of an idyllic love-passage, as if Aucassin had met Nicolette on the *Empress of Britain*. But these lovers talk philosophy and theology:: and, when the adventure was over, Mr. Knight set to work on *Hamlet*.

Medieval Pageant. By JOHN REVELL REINHARD. *Dent.* 15s.

Mr. Reinhard is evidently determined to give us all the medieval atmosphere he can muster—and no one will accuse him of the old fault of taking what was essentially a medieval idea and transposing it into modern times. The scene is laid in a Welsh castle—and he at once presents us with an overwhelming and rather unexpected mixture of famous characters. John of Salisbury, Wiclif, Brondel, Froissart, Machiavelli, Chretien de Troyes, Boccaccio, Eices ind Righ, etc., find themselves somewhat strangely rubbing shoulders with nothing better to do with their time or brains than to indulge in back-chat and story-telling. The collection of stories is in itself admirable, and covers almost every field in medieval literature—Fabliaux, Romances, Legends, Ballads, Miracles. One can only think it is a pity that Mr. Reinhard took "Such liberties as seemed necessary to convey to the Gentle Reader of the twentieth century the same impression as that received by the Gentle Auditor of the eleventh, twelfth or thirteenth," and that, as a result of these liberties, many of the stories have been changed.

[One of our reviewers of Children's Books last week mistakenly lamented the absence of a new "Mumfie" book this year. In point of fact John Murray publish *Mumfie's Uncle Samuel* by Katherine Tozer at 5s., which was praised by another reviewer in the same issue.]

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have only been advertised once in this paper, at the end of last month, but many musically-minded readers of the "New Statesman" are already enjoying the remarkable quality of reproduction given by these hand-made instruments. There are three models, costing from £17/10/-, and even the least expensive of them is fully up to the exacting Grape Street standard that has made our instruments famous all over the world amongst connoisseurs of music. Davey Electrical Reproducers can be heard each day in our showrooms: an illustrated catalogue is available on request.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 514

Set by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for an embarassing story about a dog. Length not more than 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Dec. 22nd.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 512

Set by John Ramage

Professor Harold Laski has written a book entitled *The Danger of Being a Gentleman*. The usual prizes are offered for passages of not more than 200 words from a book of that title by any one of the following: Thurber, J. B. S. Haldane, Cyril Connolly, Billie ("almost a gentleman") Bennett, Clive Bell, Winston Churchill, Harold Nicolson, William Hickey, Jan (Mrs. Miniver) Struther, Mark Benney.

Report by John Ramage

The notion of *das gentlemanideal* has changed, it seems, with the times. Lost causes need no satirist and, alas! in this black-out world gentlemanly cultivation excites no interest. Clive Bell found no imitators at all (what a glorious opportunity lost by Mr. Graham Bell!) and Cyril Connolly a solitary, not too happy one. Nor did the literary toughs, whether in journalism like William Hickey, or in real life like Mark Benney, receive much more of the scornful compliment of parody. After all it was perhaps not surprising in these days of all-pervading self-importance that most of the competitors should concentrate on the grandiloquent self-assurance of Winston Churchill or Billie Bennett and the leisurely and perhaps somewhat inconsequent omniscience of Harold Nicolson or J. B. S. Haldane.

The Thurbers were few but choice. Alan R. Thomas began brilliantly:

> About a year after the bed fell on father, and shortly before the night the ghost got into our house, father decided to become a gentleman.
>
> "I'm going to dress for dinner," he said, twitching his nose to show he meant it.
>
> "My goodness, you're not going to wear a monkey suit!" said mother.

But, as it seemed to me, he trailed away from the matter in hand even more than his mentor would have done. Winston Churchill was a difficult model. The entries tended to be rhetorical throughout instead of the flourishes being introduced by a passage of disarming simplicity. Maurice Edelman had a nice passage—"a gentleman who beslavers his prostrate opponents with culumnies and seals his treaties with Iscariot's kiss"; and Sir Robert Witt included a slightly acidulated reference to a famous Boer War incident. Billie Bennett provided lots of plums but no cakes you could stick the knitting-needle into. Here are a few:

> "First thing I did, got a valet called Donald, because he's got duck's disease I suppose." (J. F. Derry).
>
> and so I toiled away from twelve to noon learning to eat peas with a silver spoon. (Redling).
>
> I shall always recall with pride that charming gentleman the Prince of Wales saying to me, "They tell me you are a great funny man, Bennett, but I'll wager you are not so funny as some bagpipes. . . "

I was sorely tempted by one entry with suitable lapses of taste written, if I mistake not, by one of my most sober and distinguished supporters from the city where I am a parliamentary candidate. If there had been no political truce, he might have had a prize.

Harold Nicolson (half of them spelt his name wrongly) took a number of fancies both as the whimsical essayist and the author of *Some*

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DECEMBER 1939

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Bergerac, Savinien Cyrano de (1619–55); fought more than a thousand duels, mostly on account of his monstrously large nose. His works, often crude, but full of invention, vigour, and wit, include the Histoire Comique des Etats de la Lune et du Soleil (trans. Aldington, 1923), which suggested 'Micromégas' to Voltaire and 'Gulliver' to Swift. See Rostand. [Ber-zhe-rak].

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N.S.16

People. David Freeman had the right idea in giving a peep behind the curtain of history although this genial habit seemed to be also his own.

Some of the J. B. S. Haldanes were painfully erudite to represent so admirable a popular expositor. One competitor failed to realise that parody is not near-quotation and almost lifted a sentence from the article in the current issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. J. W. F. Hurford wrote pleasantly:

> "A navvy using a toothpick might do himself serious injury; a corporation water-sprayer conducting an operation with chloroform would kill both himself and the patient."

The best of them I recommend for the first prize, with the second prize to the best of the few Mrs. Minivers (sweet lavender having gone out of favour in war-time)...

FIRST PRIZE

"THE DANGER OF BEING A GENTLEMAN"

By J. B. S. HALDANE.

Extract from Chapter X "Occupational Morality."

. . . Virility, a mere solace to the proletarian, is a terror to the Civil Servant and the Gentleman. To the worker and any commercial traveller it presents practically no problems. You can expose a worker to a 100 per cent. blonde movie-star, and, arriving at biological brass-tacks, he gets a slight shock and walks away, so long as the platinum transmutation is fairly recognisable. A labourer expectorates, an artisan pays for affiliation, but a Gentleman splashes. For the resistance presented to leucopathy by the human male is inversely proportional to the accidents of birth and training. Divide a man's education, income and prospects each by ten; his responsibility is reduced to a thousandth, but his conscience only to one hundredth. So the consequences of falling, in the case of the Worker, are relatively ten times less than the driving force.

The Worker therefore is not afraid of his virility, he can fall without danger and react to stimulus with remarkably little trouble.

In the warehouse of an enterprising firm of white-slavers in North London, is a wooden cube 7ft. × 7ft. × 7ft. With a companion I crawl in through the trap-door which is bolted behind us. I am breathing rapidly and deeply and my pulse is at 110. . . .

H. P. BLUNT

SECOND PRIZE

Curious, thought Mrs. Miniver, pensively nibbling a *langue-de-chat*, how difficult life was becoming for people who happened to have come out of the top drawer.

She poked the fire, tilting the tarred logs until a stream of molten lava poured down. Yes—that was symbolic. . . . The black stream (or would it, perhaps, be a Red one?) would soon pour ruthlessly down over the Clems and the Carolines, the Tobys, Judys and Vins; over their luncheon-parties and shooting-parties, and all the civilised fun which they had so long and so lightheartedly enjoyed.

Unless—unless what? Wasn't there something they could do about it, some means of preserving all that was gay and lovely in their tradition, while purging it of all that was dangerous and bad? She felt a faint stirring in the back of her mind, as of some small wood animal waking from its winter sleep. . . .

But just then the telephone rang. The trouble was, thought Mrs. Miniver as she reached out to answer it, that one never *quite* had time to get to the bottom of one's deeper thoughts. That, perhaps, was the Danger of Being a Gentleman. . . . K. WATKINS

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 510

Set by Robinson Moody

A letter to the *Times* suggests that uniforms for women warworkers are unnecessary and unæsthetic. The usual prizes of Two Guineas and Half a Guinea are offered for lines on the subject of women in khaki, written by Pope to add to his Epistle on the Characters of Women. Entries are not to exceed twenty-four lines.

Report by Robinson Moody

It is no doubt mere malice that attributes the shortage of Army overcoats to the avidity with which the fair sex has raided our supplies of khaki cloth. This colour has one obvious purpose, to conceal its wearer from enemy eyes, and since the A.T.S. are not destined to man (so to speak) the front line, they might advantageously be uniformed in a less unbecoming colour. But perhaps it is as an anaphrodisiac that khaki is enjoined by the War Office. A shade that dims the world-famed good looks of our Guardsmen is no less calculated to obscure the charms of Phyllis and Cloe. The wisdom of such a policy is, however, doubtful, for in another twenty years the country may again be in urgent need of a militia. Three of the competitors supposed that Pope would approve of women in khaki, and Willy Tadpole begins:

> Let woman always—this alone we ask—
> Be clad in raiment suited to her task.

But the Epistle to which these lines are to be added is, excepting its concluding compliment, entirely satirical. But if Pope (most improbably, as I think) had taken this view, he would not have expressed it in the Epistle of the Characters of Women, which is, except in its concluding compliment, entirely satirical. Most of the entries contained excellent lines, and here are some admirably disobliging extracts:

> See her, 'twixt Cherry and Petunia torn,
> Pond'ring which shade will best her lips adorn,
> Assaying prettily some manly task
> (With what success the wise need scarcely ask)
> Or, if the hedge a Pressman should disclose,
> Posing, yet slyly seeming not to pose.
> Now at Headquarters, now in the Canteen,
> She's seldom occupied, but always seen.—(M.R.B.).

> Since Gracchus and the jewels joined the strife,
> Cornelia wearies of domestic life
> And though she has no knowledge of the game,
> Knows that her title's a sure key to fame,
> Her pictures now adorn the weekly press—
> "Lady Cornelia in her army dress."—(A. Stubbs).

> Martia that once was avid for the male
> Grows patriotic as advances fail;
> Remains a virgin, though she was not shy,
> Too plain to capture and too young to buy.—(Gragge).

> For—strange reverse of Nature's laws—we find
> The butterfly once more to grub declined.—(J. K. Moore).

> But all her girls, or as she says, her kids
> With blushes haste to do just as she bids,
> Whilst, changing one profession for another,
> Some find they've changed a madame for a mother.
> (Charles Furbank).

> Outspread the peacock and outblush the rose.—(M. Snow).

> She merely squares her shoulders, sets her jaws,
> She can face-powder in a righteous cause!
> Who knows not Flavia, in her bright inanity
> Serving her King, her country, and her vanity.—(Little Billee).

> There should be softer work for women's hand:
> Small children to obey where they command;
> Home fires to tend; the spinning-wheel to turn;
> And butter-cream for dairymaids to churn.—(Allan M. Laing).

P. Baggallay, Lorna Rainbow and Koorali are others who made good attempts. N. Lewis sent in very elegant lines, but they were inadequately satirical. I wish I could reward all the competitors for the trouble to which I put them by losing the original entries. The first prize goes without any doubt to J.R.B., for a dazzling entry. For second prize I hesitated for a long while between the claims of Little Billee, David Rintoul, M.R.B. and J. M. Stoddart. Finally I decided in favour of the last.

> . . . Camilla comes, insinuating Rogue,
> Mistress of Siren arts, but slave of Vogue.
> The ruling Passion of Camilla's heart
> Has one propelling Mainspring—to be smart:
> Where Fashion calls, submissive she will go,
> Be it to Bond Street or to Savile Row:
> In peace, a Butterfly; in times more grim,
> Thick-shod, drab-suited, stern—but in the Swim.
> "Needless! Unpleasing!" do the Critics cry?
> Her Need and Pleasure are to catch the Eye.
> How then if Vogue dictates—alas, unkind—
> Cloth for Invisibility designed?
> The maid obeys; but now her care is spent
> In studied Sameness to be Different;
> To keep in step, but rise above the Rut
> With Uniform design, but better Cut.
> Yet be her martial Outside what it will,
> Be sure Camilla is a woman still.
> Seductive Art, not wholly in eclipse,
> Banned from her dress, is vivid on her Lips:
> Manly her bearing, soldierly her Oaths,
> But still she keeps her silken Underclothes.
> The lupine semblance is but surface-deep,
> For every woman is at heart a Sheep. J.R.B.

WOMEN IN KHAKI

> Mark how Corinna pranks it down the Street
> In martial Garments, tight about the Seat.
> A mighty Cap, with Peak, o'erhangs her Brow,
> As when some Garland decks the homely Cow.
> Not thus did great ELIZA walk the land,
> In clumsy kirtle, coloured like the sand,
> In Tunic drab, with Buttons all bestuck,
> And gait like Elephant, or waddling Duck.
> Thou great BELISHA! Hear thy servant's prayer
> And ban this harsh disguising of the Fair.
> Let curling tresses wanton in the wind
> And not by martial Edict be confined.
> Let filmy Robes among the WATS be seen,
> And let them be of pink, and blue, and green.
> So may Corinna, female once again,
> Win peace by blandishing, not aping, men,
> And having learned anew her Siren's part,
> Melt even SCHICKELGRUBER'S stony heart. J. M. STODDART

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From THIS ENGLAND

See advertisement on page 905 of this issue.

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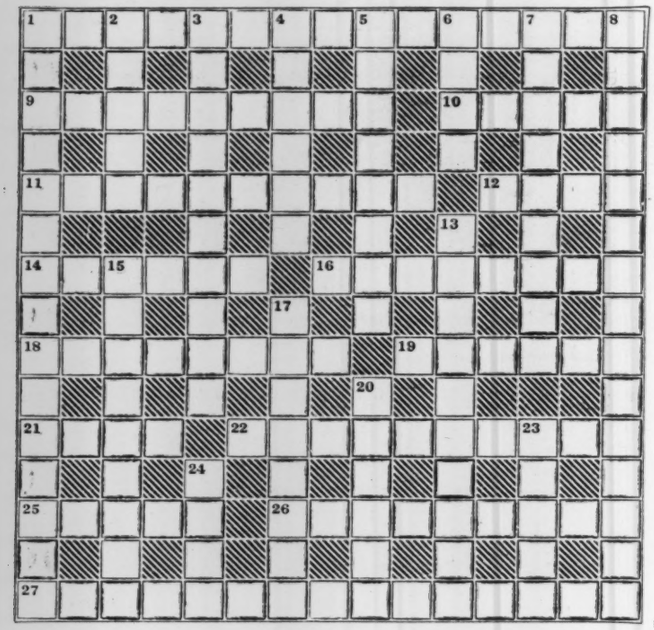

Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss Gayton, 52 Daniel Road, Truro, Cornwall

ACROSS

1. His job is making faces as it were. (15)
9. People who go ratting. (9)
10. "Sapping a solemn — with solemn sneer" (Byron). (5)
11. How theories are tried out by the medical profession? (10)
12. To return to the essence of the thing. (4)
14. O, such a measure is literally Greek. (6)
16. Returned a dead bone. (8)
18. Breeches for the Buffs? (8)
19. What backers do. (6)
21. A foiled raid. (4)
22. It's caked over as it were. (10)
25. One makes a perfect aim with this. (5)
26 (rev.). It's sad to paint evil. (9)
27. The gods at Aintree? (15)

DOWN

1. A most uncavalier person. (15)
2. How to do the N.U.R. down. (5)
3. The talk of the ramblers. (10)
4. Starts Indian fashion, but trails off into a Muscovite 20. (6)
5. Initially given by a Privy Councillor. (8)
6. Peer's cape. (4)
7. The majority of men. (9)
8. Dashed if messages don't get dotted about all over the world by it. (15)
13. Where to find the Alps in Rome. (10)
15. Seasonable accessory on the table. (9)
17 (rev.). One of the star performers is on the scent. (8)
20. See 4. (6)
23. Not always the regal look. (5)
24. Such a voice will get her completely. (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSS...

I	M	P	E	A	C	H	■	■	N	I	T	W	I	T
D	■	A	■	N	■	A	■	W	■	N	■	R	■	R
E	G	R	U	N	A	P	■	I	N	C	L	I	N	E
N	■	B	■	A	■	P	■	N	■	O	■	T	■	A
T	U	O	G	N	I	Y	R	T	■	G	R	I	S	T
I	■	I	■	■	C	■	E	■	N	■	N	■	S	■
C	A	L	L	E	R	H	E	R	R	I	N	G	■	■
■	■	■	G	■	R	■	S	■	T	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	M	U	L	T	I	C	O	L	O	U	R	E	D
C	■	A	■	A	■	S	■	L	■	■	■	O	■	R
H	E	R	O	N	■	T	E	S	T	I	M	O	N	Y
A	■	C	■	T	■	M	■	T	■	B	■	T	■	S
S	T	A	M	I	N	A	■	I	N	S	O	O	T	H
E	■	T	■	N	■	S	■	C	■	E	■	U	■	O
D	E	E	P	E	N	■	■	E	T	N	E	T	E	D

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Rates, and all information on page 912

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DON'T take the jitters, take PLEBS—the liveliest of the Labour monthlies. It has a world-wide reputation for its articles and cartoons, and its J. F. Horrabin maps. PLEBS was one of the exhibits in the Nazis' recent anti-Bolshevik Museum. 3*d.*–4*d.* post free, or 2*s.* per half-year from THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LABOUR COLLEGES, 15 South Hill Park Gardens, London, N.W.3.

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I CANNOT guarantee portraits to be finished before Christmas, but my Christmas Cards are being despatched by return of post. ANTHONY PANTING, 5 Paddington Street, London, W.1.

AMAZING articles PROVING LIFE AFTER DEATH appear in "*World Service & Psychic Review.*" 4*d.* Monthly, 32 Pages, Illustrated. The only paper in the world dealing with sane Spiritualism, Social Reform, Child and Animal Welfare, World Peace, etc., etc. Specimen copy 5*d.*, or 5*s.* yearly, post free, from: EDITOR, 13 Chesham Place, London, S.W.1.

DETECTIVES. Divorce, private enquiries, etc. Moderate. Consultation free. UNIVERSAL DETECTIVES (Establ. 1929), 12 Henrietta Street, W.C.2. TEM. 8594.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

APPOINTMENT OF SUB-LIBRARIAN

The University of Cape Town invites applications for the post of Sub-Librarian which will be vacant from the 1st January, 1940. The salary is £400 per annum, rising by annual increments of £25 to £500 per annum. The appointment will be for a probationary period of three years in the first instance. The membership of the University Provident Fund is compulsory.

Applicants must be University graduates and must submit evidence of special qualifications and experience in librarianship. The Sub-Librarian will be required, as part of his duties, to assist in teaching for courses of instruction in librarianship conducted by the University.

Applications (three copies) must reach the Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2 (from whom forms of application and further particulars may be obtained) not later than the 31st December, 1939.

BRITISH NON-FERROUS METALS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION DEPARTMENT. A temporary Junior Library Assistant required. Age 17–20. Preference given to candidates with some library experience who are studying for the Library Association examinations. Salary according to qualifications but not less than £104 to commence. Applications from British subjects only, stating age, qualifications and present post to the Secretary and Librarian, British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association, Euston Street, N.W.1.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GIRLS' CLUBS, Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, W.C.1. Girls' Club Organiser wanted for Plymouth. Age 23–40. Club leadership and some organising experience essential. Salary, £200 p.a. Applications and testimonials by December 31st to the Employment Officer.

SCHOOL Matron (French, German teaching qualifications) wishes post in school or institution. Free January. Good English references. Box 6405.

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150 Finest Large Juicy Oranges, 21*s.* Case 80 Large, Seedless Grapefruit, 25*s.* Case half each, 24*s.* Box 40 lb. Finest Dessert Apples, 18*s.* Carriage paid. C.w.o. SUNRIPE FRUIT, W16, Pierhead, Liverpool.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

HOW TO DEAL WITH OUR AMERICAN ASSETS—" EQUITIES " AS INFLATION HEDGES—TIN SHARES

THE war has to be paid for, we know, but when the bodies of good British taxpayers are about to be sacrificed on the altars of the Inland Revenue, it is small comfort to read of the vast store of Allied wealth in the United States. Why, you ask, should not the Chancellor of the Exchequer live on some of this accumulated dollar fat before gorging himself on our emaciated (sterling) skin and bones? The Federal Reserve Board declares that Great Britain and France have about $2,810 millions (say £700 millions) invested in the United States distributed as to $910 millions in dollar balances, $920 millions in marketable securities and $980 millions in direct investments not readily negotiable (Great Britain holding the bulk). This is quite apart from the pre-war gold stocks of around $5,200 millions. Of course, this accumulation of wealth has been drawn upon ever since the outbreak of war. During September and October, I am told, British nationals have been selling each day in Wall Street about $1,000,000 worth of investments, the dollar proceeds of which have been turned over to the Treasury. But the war is costing Great Britain alone over £6 millions ($24 millions) a day and to buy all the supplies we require from the United States on the " cash and carry " basis it will not be possible to rely much longer on the voluntary liquidation of American holdings by British nationals. The Treasury can, of course, compel British investors to hand over their holdings in the Keynesian manner, but they cannot compel the American investors to buy them. There are, however, two possibilities. An Investment Trust Corporation might be formed to take over these holdings with powers to issue Collateral Bonds in the American market. The proceeds of these bonds would accrue to the British Treasury, but if, say, a 200 per cent. cover were required for the bonds the Treasury would be " cashing in " on only half the market value of the underlying holdings. Alternatively a Fixed Trust might be formed on British lines which would issue sub-units to American investors against the deposit of securities by British holders. The Treasury might raise a larger sum by this method if the scheme received the right publicity and backing. But apart from our American assets I hope the Treasury will not forget that British nationals possess enormous assets in Canada and South American countries in the shape of holdings in railways and other public utilities. Why should not our Government bargain and barter with the Governments concerned with these utilities? Here is an opportunity for Argentina to buy back its railways and for Canada to acquire the Canadian Pacific. What a pity the Treasury is too late to make a deal with Mexico over the expropriated oilfields!

* * *

Some readers have been painfully impressed by my weekly argument that no group of equity shares offers a real inflation hedge in this war—thanks to Government price controls, excess profits taxation and what not. They had seen the war coming and had picked their ordinary shares carefully to give themselves compensation against a fall in gilt-edged, but to their surprise and annoyance, they have experienced a greater fall in most ordinary shares than in their fixed interest. Really it was inevitable. As the Government warned everybody that it would try to take the profit out of war, the investor cannot complain if he is deprived of a real inflation hedge. I do not suggest, however, that ordinary shares should necessarily be sold. The policy I recommend may be described as a drastic pruning of the ordinary share tree. Shares of companies badly hit by excess profits tax, by rising costs and by reduced turnover, that is, of those prevented by Government price controls and regulations from raising prices, should be sold to avoid a further capital loss. On the other hand, ordinary shares which I call the " sheltered " equities might be bought if the yield is attractive in relation to fixed interest. In the " sheltered " class for the war period may be included most gold producers' shares and not a few pampered industrials, which I will mention next week. Further, there are two groups of equities which are to some extent a hedge against an inflation, tin and rubber shares and of the two I prefer tin.

* * *

Since I recommended tin shares in this column on November 4th an important change has occurred in the tin situation. The Government has cancelled its order imposing a maximum price of £230 per ton for tin, and in the first day of free dealings on the London Metal Exchange the price of tin soared to £280. The reason for the Government *volte face* is twofold: first, the extraordinary demand for tin in the United States and on the Continent since the outbreak of war has shown no signs of abating —in fact it has been accentuated by purchases for the account of the United States War Department; secondly, it had become a costly absurdity that foreigners should be able to buy tin from British producers in the East at £230 per ton and sell in New York at £285 per ton. Why did not the British Government buy the entire output of our producers and pocket this difference? If anyone should be allowed to profit by this disparity in price, it should be British nationals, not foreigners, seeing that the Treasury is crying out for dollar exchange. The International Tin Committee must not be blamed for the Government's mistake in fixing a maximum price of £230 per ton. The Committee had no part in taking that wrong decision. It is solely concerned with balancing supply with demand, and in view of the present panicky demand the Committee has again revised its quota for the first quarter of 1940 up to 120 per cent. of standard. It cannot be under any illusion as to the nature of the present demand, which receives its present impetus from a stocking-up movement. Actual consumption is probably running at the rate of not much more than 200,000 tons per annum which, allowing for the fact that Bolivia and the non-restricting countries are unable to produce to a full capacity, can be taken care of by a 100 per cent. quota. As soon as the stocking-up demand abates, the price of tin will fall and the International Tin Committee will fix a much lower quota for the quarter ending June, 1940. I should not be surprised to see the price back to £230 per ton and a quota of 80 per cent. for March to June of 1940. This does not mean that the shares of Malayan and Nigerian producers after the recent rise are no longer attractive. These low-cost producers can earn excellent dividends with tin at £210 per ton and an average quota of 80 per cent. They now have twelve months' exceptional prosperity ahead and dividends should be restored in 1940 to the 1937 levels. Previously to be on the conservative side, I had estimated yields on the basis of 1936 dividends. The shares I recommended still look good to hold.

Shaverwocky

(with apologies to Lewis Carroll)

'Twas shaving, and the bristly gents
Did writhe and wrestle in the morn
All anguished were their teguments
And their follicles out-torn.

" Beware the Scrapershave my son,
The blades that bite, the hairs that catch
Beware the Bristlechin and shun
The stubbling Razorsnatch."

He took his sharp bright blade in hand
And water hot—an ample stream
To tame his beard he commandeered
Parke-Davis Shaving Cream.

And as with deftish stroke he swept
The whiskers from his physiog
The Scrapershave the ghost upgave
And died as dead as dog.

One two! One two! and through and through
The silky blade went snicker-snack!
He felt his chin and with a grin
He went clean-shaven back.

" Oh, thou hast slain the Scrapershave,
The credit's thine, P.D.S.C.!
Oh beardless day, Callooh, Callay!"
He chortled in his glee.

'Twas shaving—the once bristly gents
Have chins as smooth as any dream
For they have learned real shaving sense
Parke-Davis Shaving Cream!

Try Parke-Davis Shaving Cream for yourself! It will give you a quicker smoother shave than ever before! Your chemist sells large 1s. 6d. tubes.

Company Meeting

BRITISH TYRE & RUBBER

SIR WALROND SINCLAIR'S ADDRESS

THE Fifteenth Annual General Meeting of British Tyre and Rubber Company Limited was held on Tuesday last in London.

Sir Walrond Sinclair, K.B.E., chairman and managing director, said that the net profit amounted to £217,933 against £177,112, and this was the eighth successive year in which the board had been able to report an increase in profits. The immediate effect of the outbreak of war had been a sharp increase in demand for the company's products. Fortunately, with the advantage of well balanced stocks, they had been in a position to meet the abnormal situation and to maintain the satisfactory service to customers.

The year's results fully justified the maintenance of the Ordinary dividend at the same level as for the past five years by the payment of a final 4½ per cent., making 8 per cent. for the year. On the matter of bonus, after careful consideration the directors had decided to recommend a bonus of 3 per cent. as against 2 per cent., thus maintaining the distribution on the same level as for the last three years, plus an additional 1 per cent. to cover the increased rate of income-tax.

At the outbreak of war the rubber industry had reacted to the altered situation promptly and in a manner worthy of the occasion. Taken as a whole, the increased prices since the commencement of hostilities were unquestionably less than the actual additional cost of raw materials to the manufacturing undertakings.

While, national effort must first be directed to the adequate equipment of the armed forces, and to the essential services at home, export trade was more essential to the nation to-day than ever before. With a lead from the Government coupled with an assurance that (subject to the prior allocation of supplies essential for the Fighting Forces and Home Services) an appropriate proportion of the balance of the Nation's resources both of material and man power would be earmarked for export trade and allocated sufficiently far ahead, manufacturers could then plan their approach to overseas markets on sound business lines and with the confidence that they would be able to fulfil their contracts. He was positive that the country's export industries would take full advantage of the opportunity, and, by providing the nation with a free flow of foreign exchange and purchasing power overseas, ensure an appreciable measure of success, both in the present conflict and in the economic struggle which must inevitably follow it.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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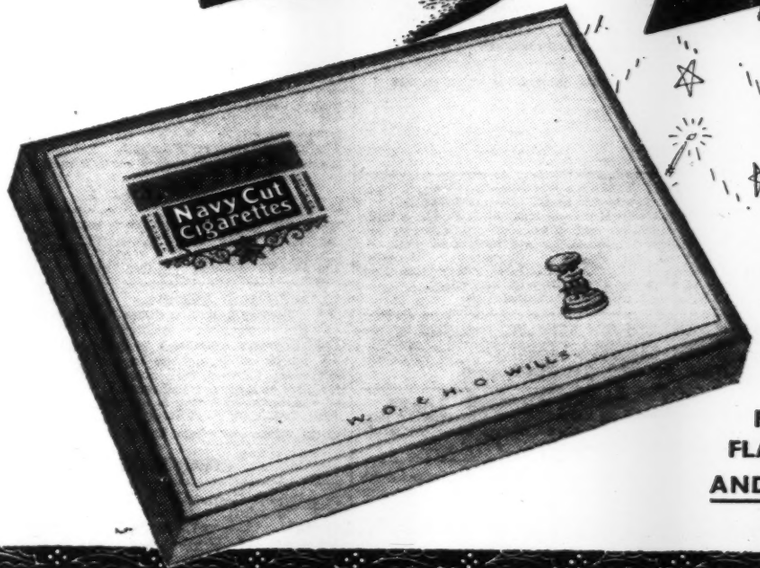

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